THE INDEPENDENT

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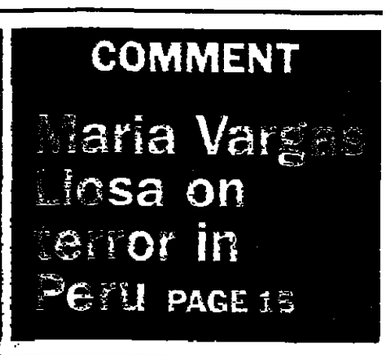


Rifkind: Europe is stalled by Britain

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Britain's "lame-duck" government is now stalling talks on the future of the European Union, the shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said last night.

The attack followed an admission by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, that there would be no hard negotiations in the inter-governmental talks on the future of the Union until after the next election.

"I don't expect the negotiating to become really serious until after our election on the issues where there is a difference between ourselves and the Labour Party," Mr Rifkind told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme.

"Because, obviously, what other European governments are waiting to see is if there was a change of government in this country, then some of the demands from Brussels would simply fall into their lap. They would not need to negotiate.

"So... they will wait to see the outcome of the general election."

But, with Conservative ministers now directing all their attention to the campaign for an election that could still be up to four months off, Mr Cook condemned the paralysis at the heart of the Government.

"It is not only Britain that is now being held back by this lame-duck government," he told *The Independent*, "but, on the Foreign Secretary's admission, the whole of Europe.

"I am glad Mr Rifkind has admitted that the rest of Europe expects Labour to be elected. He has let out one of the reasons why it is important that the Conservatives go; they cannot do business on important matters on which we cannot stand still."

The Foreign Secretary's statement also raises the question as to whether any agreement can possibly be reached on the future-of-Europe package in time for an Amsterdam summit in June.

If no substantive negotiations are to be held until after the election, and the election is delayed until 1 May, there would be insufficient time for any government – Tory or Labour – to finalise agreement on a number of issues, such as qualified majority voting, that must remain controversial for both parties.

The Conservative strategy is to portray Tony Blair as the Brussels "poodle" who will roll over and concede critical elements of British sovereignty in the talks.

Labour replies that Mr Blair can be as sceptical as John Major on essential questions, but he does not have to look over his shoulder at a recalcitrant and rebellious party which gives him no room for manoeuvre in European talks.

The extent to which the election campaign will dominate the Westminster and Whitehall agendas for the new year was illustrated by further developments yesterday.

The Conservative Research Department issued a briefing paper alleging that Labour was about to embark on a "negative campaigning" spree in January; denigrating its opponents rather than selling its own positive message.

The Tories alleged that Labour was planning to spell out the "nightmare vision" of the country if Mr Major won a fifth term of office.

While Labour claims that the Tories are planning a £7m poster campaign, the Tories said all the evidence showed that Labour was being relentlessly negative, with its "Enough is enough" campaign.

Labour is equally conscious of the Conservative capacity for negative campaigning, and is reminding frontbenchers that they must make no statements that might be taken to commit Labour to spend more money in government.

Ministers last month totted up the costs of every Labour spending commitment they could possibly pin on their opponents, and came up with a figure of £30bn.

That figure will be used to sustain a repeat of the highly successful 1992 Conservative election campaign theme; that Labour will have to finance its alleged spending commitments with a secret "tax bombshell" for middle-income families.

Artful parcel: A statue well wrapped-up for protection against frost damage standing in the restored early 18th-century Privy Garden at Hampton Court Palace, in south-west London Photograph: John Voos

Cold enough for statues to wrap up, for snow to fall in central London... yet it's one of the warmest years on record

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Much of lowland Britain received its first snowfall of the winter yesterday, but the world as a whole remained over-heated this year.

Frost and patchy fog is forecast for the last weekend of 1996 – a year which is turning out to be one of the ten warmest in a record of global temperatures stretching back over 140 years.

With almost all the data for the calendar year gathered in by the Meteorological Office's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction in Berkshire, it emerges that six of the ten hottest years are from the Nineties and three from the Eighties. This adds to scientists' confidence that they are witnessing a man-made warming caused by a build-up of heat trapping gases in the atmosphere – a trend that could have great impact on farming, water resources and wildlife within a few decades.

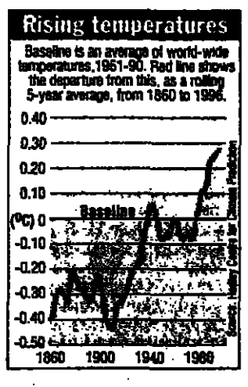
The Hadley Centre takes data from more than 1,000 weather stations around the world. "The run of warm years is continuing," one of its climatologists, Dr David Parker, said. Together with the University of East Anglia, the centre keeps temperature records stretching back to 1860 using observations from ships and buoys as well as on-land stations.

The record shows 1995 as the hottest overall year, followed by 1990, then 1991 and 1994; 1996 is expected to be the eighth warmest. From January to November, temperatures around the planet were, on average, 0.23C above the long-term averages for the 30 years between 1961 and 1990. Dr Parker said that with year after year of temperatures well above average, confidence was growing that this was the "signal" of the man-made climate change forecast to accelerate into the next century.

"The overall temperature trend may be upwards ... but there will still be cooler years and even cooler decades because of the large natural variability in the climate," he added.

The atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, produced chiefly by burning fossil fuels and forests, have been rising steadily. As a result the atmosphere's balance of heat radiation shifts, warming the air near the surface and cooling higher altitudes.

■ The Department of Social Security made its first post-Christmas announcement of areas where vulnerable households on income support will be entitled to extra cold-weather payments of £8.50 to keep warm. The list included five places in Scotland and Liscombe in Somerset.



Nurses made confessions 'under extreme pressure'

Steve Boggan

Confessions allegedly made by two British nurses charged with killing a fellow nurse in Saudi Arabia were extracted under pressure after five days of questioning, according to colleagues of the women in Dhahran.

Sources at the King Fahd Military Medical Centre, where Yvonne Gilford, 51, was murdered, claim that the women were told they would be freed if they signed the confessions.

Details of the pressure on the women emerged as the family of one, Lucille McLauchlan, 31, held an emotional news conference at which they disclosed that she had called them from prison to protest her innocence.

Ms McLauchlan and Deborah Parry, 41, were charged on Christmas Eve with the murder of Yvonne Gilford, in Dhahran. Ms Gilford, an Australian, had been stabbed four times, beaten over the head with a hammer and smothered in her room on 10 December. A week later, the two British nurses were allegedly caught by a store video camera using her credit cards.

A colleague of the accused, who refused to be named, said: "Both girls were questioned for five days without lawyers present. They were told that if they signed a confession, they would be allowed to go home. Nobody here believes that the girls could have done this."

Another said there was concern over a murder two years ago in which a Filipino nurse was stabbed to death. That case remains unsolved, although no one was available at the medical centre to confirm the details last night. A third nurse said: "Obviously, everyone here is very concerned and very frightened. It is very hard to believe that those girls could have been responsible for such a brutal murder." During yesterday's news conference in Ms McLauchlan's home town of Dundee, her mother, Ann, broke down in tears and her father, Stan, displayed signs of strain. Her brother, John, 28, was the only family member to speak.

He said: "We have spoken to Lucy very briefly on the phone and she has assured us of her innocence.

"We are obviously worried sick about her situation and are making efforts to secure the very best legal representation for her. Lucy lived for nursing and has spent all her working life caring for others. Anyone who knows Lucy knows she is not capable of hurting anyone."

Family details for Ms Parry, who is thought to come from the Midlands, are unclear. It is understood she told colleagues in Dhahran that her mother, father, brother and brother-in-law were all dead.

QUICKLY

French stop Kurds aid

France announced that it will not continue in allied surveillance operations over northern Iraq. The United States, Turkey and Britain will continue the operation, started in 1991 after the Gulf War to protect the Kurds. Page 11

No housing boom

House prices are on a firm upward path, but not rising fast enough to threaten an unsustainable boom, according to the biggest mortgage lenders. Page 3

Adoption changes

Voluntary agencies, church groups and charitable bodies could be given a key role in deciding the suitability of would-be adoptive parents as part of an attempt by John Major to lessen the influence of social workers. Page 2

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news

Poverty warning over pensions shortfall

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Millions of people are heading for retirement penury, according to a detailed Labour analysis of official pensions statistics.

John Denham, the shadow pensions minister, said yesterday: "Tory pension policy is like a pensions *Titanic*. Millions of people are sailing unknowingly towards a retirement disaster. Information collated from many different surveys shows that millions of people are not covered by employers' pension schemes; others are making tiny contributions to personal pensions, or are making no second pension provision at all.

"Smaller companies are least likely to offer pension schemes, and these are often inadequate. Women are most likely to receive inadequate pensions."

Mr Denham has discovered that almost a quarter of all working adults – nearly 6million people – have not made any pension provision whatever.

But of the 5.5 million who have appropriate personal pensions, 4.5 million made monthly minimum contributions of £50 or less in 1994-95.

"Low contributions and high charges mean that the pension paid will be very low – investing £50 a month would give a final pension of only £2,000 a year," Mr Denham said.

Yet the average monthly minimum contribution to all personal pensions is only £35 a month, and in 1994-95 more than 1.8 million people with personal pensions made no contribution at all.

According to a Department of Social Security report, *Personal Pension Statistics 1994-95*, the lowest minimum contributions to personal pensions are being made by people living in the North, Wales and Northern Ireland, where median minimum contributions are less than £30 a month.

Other facts uncovered by Mr Denham include:

■ A woman who takes a career break of four years to have children, the national average, will retire on a personal pension worth almost a third less than a colleague who takes no break;

■ Only six out of 10 employees in private companies are covered by any employer's pension scheme;

■ In the 1 million firms with fewer than 100 employees, fewer than four out of 10 employees are covered by a pension scheme;

■ Seven out of 10 companies with five or fewer employees do not offer any kind of pension arrangement;

■ Most employees in small company occupational pension schemes are likely to get about half the employer contribution to their pension that they could expect from a traditional large company scheme.

However, the Labour spokesman last night accepted that while millions were making inadequate provision for their retirement, one of the most widespread complaints was that those who had saved were penalised when it came to means-tested benefits – with those who had not saved getting their basic state pensions topped up with council tax benefit and housing benefit.

Mr Denham said last night that one of a Labour government's first tasks would be to set up an independent body to report and advise on the state of pension provision.

It would also establish a value-for-money "stakeholder pension", offering better pensions for the same level of contributions.

Adoption law to curb political correctness

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

Voluntary agencies, church groups and charitable bodies could be given a key role in deciding the suitability of would-be adoptive parents in a bid by the Prime Minister to stamp out political correctness in adoption and reduce the influence of social workers.

John Major has asked the Downing Street Policy Unit to examine all possible alternatives to local authority social workers who currently carry out the bulk of assessment work, in advance of unveiling a Conservative election manifesto pledge to reform adoption law.

The Policy Unit review comes amid mounting concern about the plight of the 55,000 children in local authority care, a number of whom Mr Major believes could be being denied the chance of a stable adoptive family because of political correctness in council social services departments.

A party source said: "He is concerned about cases such as the couple on a blacklist because they had too many books in the house, or the mixed-race child who had to wait three years while social workers tried to find a mixed race couple."

If the Conservatives win the election, the Government plans to revive the draft adoption Bill which was dropped before this autumn's Queen's Speech. The Bill was axed because of fears that it would re-ignite the fury over family values that had been generated by the divorce law changes. But amid mounting concerns for children moving through a succession of different foster parents or at risk of being institutionalised or abused in care homes, Mr Major now views reforming adoption procedures as a priority for the next Parliament.

The source conceded that most of the expertise in assessment for adoption lay with social work departments in local authorities. But under the plans being developed, other bodies, including the religious adoption agencies, children's charities or local church-based groups, would be encouraged to take on a far greater role in the work of matching a child with an adoptive family.

The possibility of allowing new organisations to set themselves up as private sector bodies rather than within the voluntary/charitable sector has not yet been ruled either in or out by Downing Street. But a full-scale "privatisation" of adoption assessment – which would provoke warnings about "baby-farming" practices common in some overseas countries – is believed to be unlikely.

The assessment of prospective adopters would be carried out within a strict legal framework setting out the rights of natural parents, children and prospective adopters.

The Government hopes that widening the field will lead to a cultural change in favour of adoption as a natural choice for women, as it once was, who face difficulties in looking after their babies.

Full-time attack on Asda chief

Anthony Bevins

Labour warned yesterday that the voters of Tunbridge Wells would be "short-changed" if they voted for the Tory candidate Archie Norman at the next election – because the Asda chairman believes that being an MP is not a full-time job.

Mr Norman said in a pre-Christmas interview with the *Yorkshire Post* that for this reason he hoped to stay on as part-time chairman of the store group for another three years.

That provoked Labour campaign spokesman Brian Wilson to reply: "Most MPs find that constituency and parliamentary work add up to something more than a full-time job. The idea that you can also run a grocery chain is bizarre ... With an attitude like this, it would be no surprise if Tunbridge Wells decides to express its disgust."

Despite Mr Wilson's protestations, a significant minority of MPs do treat the Commons as a part-time place of employment. A number of former ministers who are standing down from Parliament at the next election have already taken up time-consuming and lucrative outside jobs, including Richard Needham, who has joined GEC, and Tristan Garel-Jones, who is advising the Union Bank of Switzerland, Biwater International, British Gas and BP Exploration.

But the part-time element is by no means confined to the Tory benches. Labour MPs are as prone as Tories, and others, to opt out of the routine parliamentary business of making speeches and asking questions.

An *Independent* analysis published in March 1990 showed that in the 1988-89 Commons session, a total of 19 MPs were literally speechless in the Chamber. Six of those MPs were Labour, 10 were Tories and three were from minority parties.

Mr Norman, who hopes to succeed retiring Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew as MP for Tunbridge Wells, recently joked to *Tatler* magazine that after working flat out for five years at Asda, he hoped being an MP would, uniquely in his case, let him spend more time with his family.

Under arrest: Police removing a protester from the camp yesterday Photograph: Tim Cuff

Bailiffs swoop on road protest camp

Environmental protesters who camped on the route of a £65m road scheme turned the rural site into a "waste dump", according to the official who led their eviction yesterday.

The Under Sheriff of Devon, Trevor Coleman, removed the five protesters in an early morning swoop on the camp at Allercombe, east Devon, with the help of 20 bailiffs and 30 police.

They were asleep in treehouses when the authorities moved in at the spot known locally as Sleepy Hollow. A man and a woman were arrested.

"I am disappointed that for so-called environmental protesters they have taken little care of their immediate environment, and the site resembles a waste dump," said Mr Coleman.

Around 100ft of tunnels dug by the protesters were excavated by a mechanical digger after being inspected by an expert, and Mr Coleman admitted: "They were more extensive than we expected."

A climbing specialist was on hand as trees carrying the network of aerial walkways and "twigloo" dwellings were cut down.

A few miles away at the more extensive Fairmile and Tipheim camps, protesters took to their treehouses when [illegible] the Alert [illegible] came [illegible]

A spokesman at Fairmile said the camps were on full alert, and the call had already gone out nationwide for more support.

The eviction followed the refusal of protesters to comply with a notice issued by the Under Sheriff in November giving them 48 hours to move voluntarily.

Possession orders for the sites were granted to the road construction consortium Connect and the Highways Agency in October.

The three camps were set up over two years ago on the route of the 13-mile Honiton to Exeter A30 scheme – part of the 65-mile upgrading and improvement of sections of the A30 and A35 road between Exeter and Bere Regis in Dorset.

The protesters claim the road will destroy ancient trees and animal habitats, as well as blight the countryside, and increase air and noise pollution.

But local residents, who have been promised a bypass since 1929, back the scheme.

The road builders say the scheme will relieve local communities of the effects of heavy traffic. They anticipate that up to 3,600 road casualties – including over 100 deaths – will be avoided over the next 30 years. They have pledged to provide extensive landscaping, over 200,000 new trees, and ecological measures including bat boxes, badger tunnels and setts and the preservation of rare plants.

significant shorts

Missing girl found hanged in forest

The body of a teenage girl whose disappearance had sparked a massive police search was yesterday found hanging in woodland near her home. Stephanie Edmunds, 16, vanished on Christmas Eve after a row with her father at their home in Rhigos, near Hirwaun, South Wales.

Mounted police and a helicopter were brought in to help comb hillsides near Stephanie's home after her friends revealed that she had not spent Christmas with them. A police spokeswoman said "We would like to speak to anyone who may have seen her since Christmas Eve or who can give any information concerning her state of mind," she said.

Teenager dies of meningitis

A 14-year-old girl has died from suspected meningitis and another teenager and a baby from the same area of the North-East are being treated in hospital, it was disclosed yesterday.

Donna Thomson of Oxclose, Washington, Tyne and Wear, died in the intensive care unit of Newcastle General Hospital on Christmas Eve, a day after being found seriously ill by her parents. She was thought to have been suffering from the meningococcal strain, the disease's most serious form.

The other cases which have come to light on Wearside are an unnamed 16 year old girl from the Shiney Row area, near Washington, and a baby from Southwick, Sunderland.

Ambulance in deadly game

Teenage joyriders twice rammed an ambulance answering an emergency call in the Twinbrook area of West Belfast yesterday and blocked its path. Three cars played "cat and mouse" before forcing it to halt. A crowd of drunken youths gathered and directed a torrent of abuse at the crew and then hurled beer cans and other missiles at the ambulance, threatening to set it on fire with the crew inside.

Multiple birth mother arrested

Mandy Allwood (below), who earlier this year lost eight babies she was expecting following fertility treatment, has been arrested by police, it emerged yesterday. Miss Allwood, 31, was questioned by officers in Solihull, West Midlands, about alleged fraud offences understood to relate to a loan.

She was interviewed by local fraud squad officers a week ago and bailed to report back to Solihull police station on 7 February, pending further inquiries. Miss Allwood continued with her multiple pregnancy despite some medical opinion that it would be safer to abort some of the foetuses. But she miscarried them all at 19 weeks in October.

High-jinks prove costly

A British man taking his terminally-ill wife on their last holiday together was arrested after becoming drunk on the flight and assaulting an elderly passenger and flight crew.

The 47-year-old man from Blackpool became violent after drinking a "considerable" amount of whisky on the American Airlines flight to Chicago. He assaulted the 76-year-old woman sitting in front of him and then attempted to kick a flight attendant in the stomach before he was restrained with plastic handcuffs.

The flight crew diverted the plane to land at Goose Bay, Newfoundland, where the man, who has not been named, was arrested and questioned.

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Will house prices hit the roof again?

Lenders hail a recovery built on firm ground

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

House prices are on a firm upward path, but are not rising *fast enough to threaten* an unsustainable boom, according to some of the country's biggest mortgage lenders. Their New Year forecasts proclaim that the housing recovery is built on solid foundations.

The biggest lenders, the Halifax, Abbey National and Nationwide, predict an increase *of 7 to 8 per cent in house prices* in 1997, about the same as the past 12 months.

Lenders are eager to encourage the recovery in their business but are nervous about the echoes of the late-1980s house-price boom. Their cautious forecasts contrast with buoyant surveys of home buyers, and with some experts who forsee even bigger price gains next year than this.

The Government is walking the same tightrope as the banks and building societies. The Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, talked up the feel-good effect on voters of the housing boom in a Boxing Day radio interview. However, the Chancellor and the Prime Minister have promised that there will be no return to the days of boom and bust.

"Views on the state of the housing market do seem to be polarising between those who predict a boom and those who predict the market will settle down on a more modest growth path. My view rests in the latter camp," said Andrew Clark, chief economist for the Bradford & Bingley building society.

It is a view shared by the Nationwide, which yesterday predicted house prices would increase by 7 per cent in 1997, lower than the rise of more than 8 per cent in 1996. It said the recovery was "soundly based".

"We expect more existing home owners to enter the market next year and this is likely to lead to higher sales as supply bottlenecks ease," said Philip Williamson, commercial director. The society reckons supply shortages have distorted the recovery so far.

The Nationwide said increases in double digits were confined to London and the South-east. Across the country, average house prices had dipped fractionally in December to a level 8.5 per cent higher than a year earlier.

The Halifax publishes its latest monthly figure next week, but has forecast price rises of 7-8 *per cent in both 1997 and* 1998, a shade higher than the 7-per-cent increase that it measured in 1996. It argues that the market will be steadier than it has been for the past 25 years.

The Nationwide and Halifax, which both underestimated the extent of house price increases in 1996, believe that the number of sales will increase sharply next year.

In spite of their measured outlook, home-owners are increasingly optimistic about the housing market. One in two people now believes the value of their home will increase during the next 12 months compared with only one in three at the start of the year, according to a survey published yesterday.

Almost two-thirds of those surveyed in London and the South-east expected their homes to rise in value in the coming year, according to the survey by Barclays Mortgages. There was least optimism in the north-west, Yorkshire and Humberside, where only two out of five expected a price rise.

Barclays Mortgages marketing director Jim Chadwick said: "It's reassuring to see predictions for housing market recovery coming from those with the power to make it happen – actual home-buyers."

The investment bank UBS has predicted an increase of 10 per cent.

David Miles, professor of economics at Imperial College, said: "Once prices do start to increase it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Signs of the times: 'Sold' stickers cover this estate agent's window in Greenwich, London

Agents urge caution before confidence

Ian Burrell

Britain's estate agents – not normally noted for understatement – moved quickly yesterday to rein in Michael Heseltine after his prediction of a "boom to come" in the housing market.

The Deputy Prime Minister's comments were received with scepticism by a body of professionals well known for verbal dexterity. Today's agents are anxious not to create the panic-buying conditions which developed prior to the ultimately disastrous housing boom of 1988.

"There's no movement in prices in this part of the world," said James Wick, of the Humberside chain James Wick and Partners. "A lot more properties are selling at their asking prices but we've seen absolutely no upward movement in prices."

Agents reported a significant increase in sales inquiries, and a minor upturn in transactions but negligible rises in price.

Modern houses in the Home Counties, London flats and terraced homes in the north were all said to be stuck in a stagnant market.

Prices of good quality family homes sold in the south-east are on the rise but partly because so few sellers are prepared to put their properties on the market.

Mr Heseltine heralded a future housing boom in a BBC radio interview on Boxing Day, in which he praised the Prime Minister for creating the "most extraordinary economic circumstances".

The word on Britain's high streets yesterday was that, having seen the effects of the last boom, housebuyers were less optimistic and a great deal more wary than the Deputy Prime Minister.

Peter Hayward, a Carlisle estate agent, said: "People are more discerning. They have learned certain lessons and they realise that you don't just buy a house because if you don't the man behind you will."

He said Cumbrian house prices were still lower today than during the housing boom. A three-bedroomed house which had been worth £55,000 in 1990 was now worth £50,000 at most.

Mr Hayward said: "I am positive for 1997 but whether it is anything to do with the Government is another issue."

If Mr Heseltine's boom does come about it is likely to emanate from the South-east and spread outwards as it did nearly a decade ago.

There has been a marked increase in activity in the central London housing market, prompting banks and building societies to predict rises in British house prices of between 7 and 10 per cent next year. Nationwide said yesterday that house sales would increase by 15 per cent in 1997.

Estate agents in the South-east said yesterday that the upturn was sharply focused on the upper end of the market.

Glennie Salt, of the Berkshire estate agents Drewett Neate, said that brand new properties and older "character" homes in the £200,000 to £300,000 price range were selling well. But she warned: "Modern boxes, characterless and built in the 1960s and 1970s with standard bathrooms and kitchens, have stagnated in price."

Many estate agents also became victims of the previous boom and bust. Now they are quick to distance themselves from the 1980s image of a wheeler-dealing shark. They profess a desire for "reasonable prices" and praise the acumen of the modern housebuyer.

As Mr Heseltine reached for the Champagne to toast the "new boom", he was warned that it could be more of an election handicap than a vote-winner.

Gordon Wighton, the Teesside area manager for Halifax property services, said: "We don't want to see a boom – it's not in the interests of anybody."

We love to buy records and Monsieur Aznavour loves to make them – again and again ...


Vintage performances: French singer Charles Aznavour and The Beatles – still popular after all these years

David Lister
Arts News Editor

Research carried out on albums and singles released this year shows that the number of recordings put onto the market reached an all-time high. There are also some startling statistics, for example the artist with the most album releases in 1996 was discovered to be French crooner Charles Aznavour. He was responsible for no fewer than 28 albums, including re-releases and compilations.

There was a big increase in spoken-word albums, the highest number of which featured various journalists interviewing the The Beatles.

And the welter of releases gave plenty of scope for confusion. For instance there was little similarity between *Shirley Bassey Sings The Movies*, a budget album of vintage recordings on the Music For Pleasure label, and *Shirley Bassey Sings The Movies*, a full-price album by Polygram with new recordings.

But even this was less confusing than rock and roller Carl Perkins, who was the subject of three different compilations on different labels, all at different prices but all entitled *Blue Suede Shoes*.

The research, by Entertainment Research & Analysis and published in *Music Week* magazine, shows that the number of albums released in 1996 was 16,148 – 26 per cent up on 1995's previous record number of 12,845. Releases of singles increased 16 per cent to 6939. There were an average of 311 albums and 133 singles released each week.

Much of the increase in singles production was due to the continuing popularity of dance music, which accounted for 56.4 per cent of the year's output.

In the albums market, the researchers recognised 138 genres, though by far the most popular fields were rock, with 27 per cent of releases, jazz, with 13 per cent, and dance with 10 per cent – dance music showing up as notably less popular on albums than singles. However, the huge increase in the number of releases by hopeful record companies is not mirrored by actual sales.

Singles and albums are, in fact, selling fewer copies than ever before. The average 1996 album sold 12,000 copies and the average single only 10,644 copies, both all-time lows.

The most prolific artist was Charles Aznavour, with jazz musicians Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington close behind. Frank Sinatra, who was 1995's most prolific artist with 21 releases, just missed the top 10 this time. He had a paltry 15 titles out during the year.

The number of spoken-word releases more than doubled to account for 4 per cent of the albums market with most still released on cassette – the BBC in particular being notably reluctant to make the move to CD.

The Corporation's landmark *Radio 4 history of Britain, This Sceptere'd Isle* was spread over 20 cassettes. Readings of poetry, fiction and biographies increased markedly with John Le Carré topping the table with eight cassettes, all of his own material. – but still lagging behind the 13 CDs of Beatles interviews.

Interview discs seems to be increasingly popular. In addition to The Beatles there were six titles featuring The Rolling Stones, five of Queen and three each with Nirvana and Oasis.

Artists with most album releases

Charles Aznavour:	28
Charlie Parker:	25
Duke Ellington:	23
Billie Holliday:	21
Tangerine Dream:	20
Black Sabbath:	19
Glenn Miller:	19
Ella Fitzgerald:	19
Edith Piaf:	19
Gregory Isaacs:	17
Benny Goodman:	17
Miles Davis:	17

news

Skin clinics exploit desperate patients

Liz Hunt
Health Editor

A patient with a disfiguring skin condition was charged almost £1,000 by a private clinic for a small pot of cream which on analysis was found to have little or no therapeutic value.

Two leading skin-care charities say that desperate patients are being increasingly exploited by clinics in London and other major cities, which may offer patients free consultations but charge large sums for any drugs that are prescribed subsequently.

Chris Barrett, chief pharmacist at the Royal Hospitals' NHS Trust in London, and who has analysed skin creams on behalf of the Vitiligo Society and the National Eczema Society, said that charging large sums for creams which will have little impact on a patient's condition was "inhuman".

Mr Barrett said: "As a pharmacist I am horrified by what some of these clinics are doing. Despicable is not a strong enough word for it. They put the whole of the medical profession in disrepute."

Michael Wadsworth, chief executive of the Vitiligo Society, said: "We are aware of four or five cases but we know there must be many more. People are too embarrassed to come forward and admit that they have been taken in. But they are desperate people in a vulnerable position.

"Many of the clinics offer free consultations but charge exorbitant prices for the drugs."

There is no cure for vitiligo, a disorder of skin pigmentation in which patches of skin lose their colour, and which affects up to 2 million people in Britain. Spontaneous repigmentation occurs in about 30 per cent of cases, but available NHS treatments using steroid creams and light therapy have mixed success, which prompts some patients to seek help wherever they can.

The depigmented patches are particularly obvious in dark-skinned people, occurring most commonly on the face, hands, armpits and groin.

One 20-year-old man with the disease spent his savings on a 50g pot of cream from the West One Clinic in Harley Street. "He was unemployed and he came in here in tears when he realised what he had done.

"It was a small pot, with a hand-written label and there was no indication of the ingredients. He showed us the receipt for £950," Mr Wadsworth said.

Analysis of the cream revealed that it contained tiny amounts of the steroid drug, Synalar (fluocinolone acetamide) heavily diluted in white soft paraffin, a non-therapeutic carrier for the drug. A 225g pot of white soft paraffin costs around £1 from the chemist. A tube of Synalar, a prescription-only medicine, costs the NHS less than £1.50.

"It was difficult to do a quantitative analysis because there wasn't enough active [therapeutic] ingredient in it," Mr Barrett said.

A pharmaceutical analysis of a similar cream from another clinic suggested there was no active ingredient present at all.

The National Eczema Society cites another case it is investigating, in which a teenage girl with acne paid a clinic £900 for "two tiny pots" labelled Acne Cream 1 and Acne Cream 2.

"After three months she went back for more cream but didn't have the £900 for another course. She asked her father for the money and he contacted us because he thought it was such a rip off," a spokesman said.

No medically qualified staff at the West One Clinic in Harley Street was available to comment on the case reported by the Vitiligo Society. The medical director did not return *The Independent*'s call, made earlier this week. A spokesman said that the vitiligo patient had paid for three month's treatment and the cream he had been given was a "preparatory" cream.

"I have his file here in front of me. He did not return for further treatment over the three months," he said earlier this week. However, Mr Wadsworth said the patient had been told by the clinic that the small pot of cream was intended for use over three months, and that if he wanted further supplies after that he would have to pay for them.

Raising hope: How the West One Clinic in Harley Street encourages patients to part with their money

Sleepy head: Molly, who was found in Gateshead on Boxing Day, being cradled by Sister Stephanie Moorhead Photograph: PA

Search for baby Molly's mother

Northumbria police are trying to trace the mother of a newborn baby girl abandoned in a hedge in sub-zero temperature conditions on Boxing Day.

The 6lb 14oz infant was found with her umbilical cord intact next to a house in Wansford Way, Whickham, Gateshead, by Darren Simms, 13, as he cycled home from his morning paper round on Thursday.

The baby, named Molly by staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Tyne and Wear, is said to be progressing.

Police said they wanted to trace the mother because they believe she needs medical attention.

The teenage mother of another newborn baby found abandoned and blue with cold in a park two days before Christmas has come forward, Essex police said yesterday.

A 15-year-old girl and a female companion visited Ilford police station, late last night following four days of appeals by Scotland Yard.

The baby boy, named Joseph by nurses at Harold Wood Hospital, in Essex, where he was being treated, was discovered by a street cleaner in Goodmayes Park in Ilford. The child, who weighed six-and-a-half pounds, was suffering from hypothermia. Doctors believe he had been born less than an hour earlier.

Joseph is now in an incubator, being watched by a team of nurses in the Harold Wood maternity ward, where his condition is described as stable.

"It is too early to say whether Joseph will be going back with his mother. That is a decision for the social services and not the police," said a Scotland Yard spokesman yesterday.

Labour seeks to stem cash aid for disasters

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

High-profile disaster relief programmes are soaking up an increasing proportion of Britain's aid budget while preventive work is being cut, the latest official figures show.

Labour's overseas aid spokeswoman, Clare Short, has accused ministers of using "sticking plasters" to cover the fact that the United Kingdom is failing to provide the help needed to stop crises – such as the recent one in Zaire – happening. She plans radically to change Britain's approach. If her party wins power she will launch a new Department of International Development and call for a move away from the Live Aid approach to helping developing countries.

Other policies which would be announced in a Labour White Paper soon after the general election include pushing for United Nations sanctions to be aimed at rich people in oppressive regimes. Dictators such as General Sese Seko Mobutu of Zaire, who spends much of his time in Switzerland, could be refused travel visas. Foreign bank accounts could be frozen and flights to offending countries limited to essential aid.

Labour also wants to phase out the Aid and Trade provision under which money is sent to countries which can provide Britain with commercial contracts. Although the new figures show this has fallen over the past four years, cash is still channelled to comparatively rich countries.

Indonesia, which is to be the subject of a Public Accounts Committee inquiry into links between aid and arms sales from the UK, has the fourth biggest aid budget from Britain despite having a *per capita* gross domestic product higher than much of Eastern Europe. Its Aid and Trade has trebled over four years to almost £29m.

Four years ago the United Kingdom used to spend the same amount on emergency aid to developing countries as it did on programme aid. But figures due out in January from the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) show that while programme aid has dropped by £36m to £82mn over that time, emergency aid has gone up by £22m to £140m.

"Aid is becoming a cover, a sticking plaster, a system that covers up a complete failure to have any strategy to deal with the growth of abject poverty in the world," Ms Short said. "There is no aid, no help, then we rush in with humanitarian aid. But how much better to have spent less on having some strategies."

The figures for the 1995-96 financial year show that Britain's aid budget has fallen to 0.28 per cent of gross national product, a little over half the 1979 figure. The UK is 15th in spending, after Japan, Germany and Finland. Top is Denmark, with 0.96 per cent of GNP.

A spokesman for the ODA said the past three years had been particularly demanding because of the conflicts in Bosnia and Rwanda.

"We don't anticipate emergency aid becoming a bigger part of our plans at all. It is a problem, though, because long-term sustainable development isn't particularly photogenic ... For instance we do a lot of work in training economists, which isn't all that interesting but which probably matters a great deal to countries like Uganda," he said.

Archaeologists reveal prehistoric roots of urban life in Britain

David Keys
Archaeology Correspondent

Excavation lays bare the home of pre-Roman sophisticates in Oxfordshire

The buried remains of a long-lost prehistoric walled town have been discovered by archaeologists seven miles south of Oxford.

Dating from the early first century AD, the town – on the site of present-day Abingdon – was defended by two miles of 40ft-wide moats and covered around 80 acres.

The discovery is likely to cause intense interest among academics as it is only the third site of its kind and size ever found in this country. The find is casting new light on the very beginnings of urban dwelling in Britain.

Excavations – directed by archaeologist Tim Allen of the Oxford Archaeological Unit – have so far revealed that, unlike most prehistoric settlements, the town was well planned, and was laid out in a grid pattern.

This suggests influence from Roman-occupied Europe despite the fact that the grid pattern town was built around 30 years before the Roman Conquest of southern Britain.

The discoveries make Abingdon the oldest known continuously inhabited town in Britain.

Evidence unearthed so far suggests that it was founded in the sixth or seventh century BC, but underwent a massive reorganisation and expansion in the early first century AD.

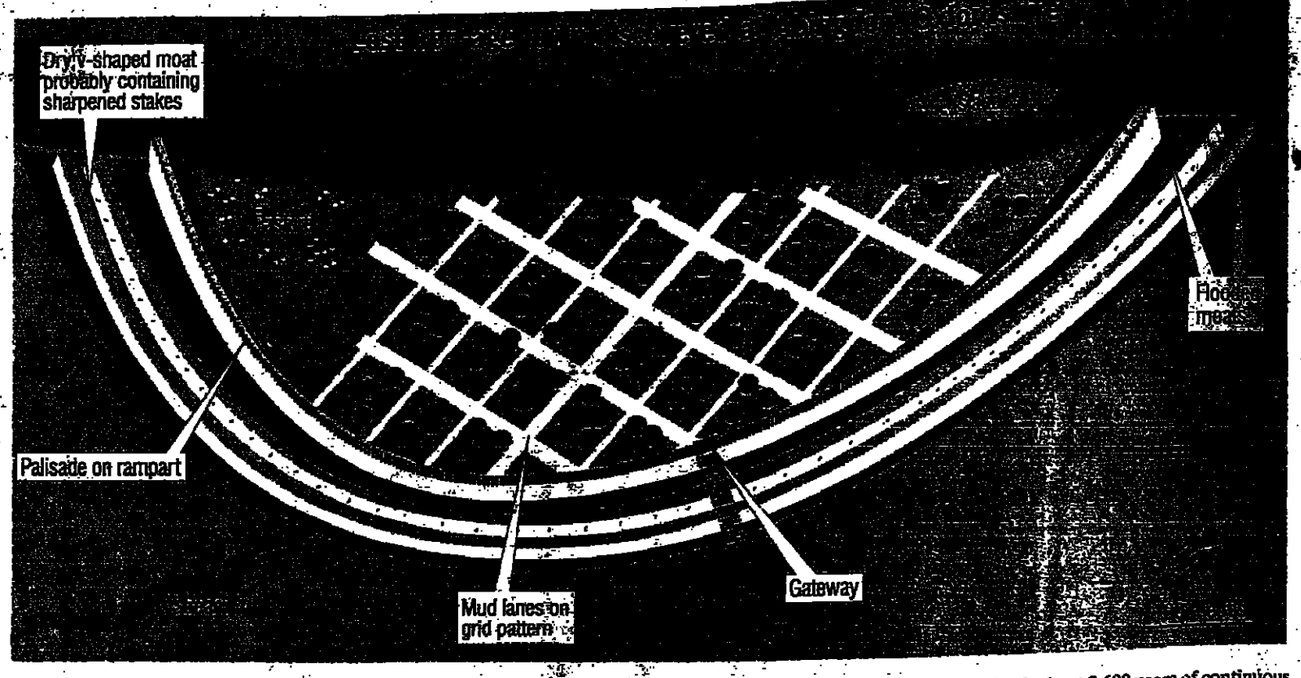
At that stage the traditional higgledy-piggledy layout was replaced by a grid system, with rows of house compounds and intersecting lanes, and the whole town was enclosed within a massive triple-moat and earthen rampart – almost certainly topped by a wooden palisade-style town wall. Archaeologists estimate that it had a population of 1500.

When southern Britain was conquered by the Romans in 43AD, Abingdon became a major centre of native prosperity.

For the first 40 years of Roman rule, Abingdon appears to have had, for an ungarrisoned native town, unusually high access to imported Roman luxury goods – notably high-quality Roman glazed pottery from France and Roman amphorae, which were full of wine, from Spain.

Culturally – and even politically – the town appears to have been linked to the pro-Roman Hampshire tribes of the Atrebatii and the Regni. Pottery finds in Abingdon have even revealed that craftsmen in the Regnian capital, Noviomagus Regnensium (Chichester), set up a ceramic manufacturing base in Abingdon. However, it is quite possible that the town – the original name of which remains a mystery – was the main centre of a previously unknown independent tribal kingdom that sold goods made south of the Thames or on the Continent to tribal kingdoms located north of the Thames.

The discoveries not only show that a British town has at least 2,600 years of continuous history, but also hints at even greater influence from Roman Gaul a generation before the conquest than had been suspected.



Whitehall 'censored' report on offenders

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

The Government has been accused of censoring a report they commissioned after all references to links between crime and unemployment were erased from a draft version.

The omissions include an introductory quote from Baroness Blatch, a Home Office minister, in which she says there is growing evidence that offenders are more likely to settle in the community if they are given work or training. The final version of the Home Office funded report, "National Audit of Offender Employment Policies and Practice" excludes a series of statements which were found in the draft edition.

The report was carried out by a charitable trust but was overseen by a working group that included representatives of the Home Office, the Prison Service and the Department for Education and Employment.

It is understood government departments are keen to play down links between crime and unemployment. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is putting through measures in the Police Bill which are expected to result in up to 8 million people seeking a job having their criminal records vetted each year. The proposed Criminal Records Agency will provide three levels of checks, according to the sensitivity of the job.

Penal reform groups have condemned the measures, saying they would make ex-offenders unemployable. So, ministers do not want to be seen to be supporting research that suggests unemployed ex-criminals will reoffend.

The Apex Trust, an ex-offender employment organisation for England and Wales, produced a draft report in July.

But the final version which looks at employment training and educational facilities for prisoners and ex-offenders, which was produced in September, had big chunks missing.

Paragraphs taken out of the introduction included: "In her opening address to the multi-agency seminar 'Improving the Employment Prospects of Offenders' in 1995, Baroness Blatch, Minister of State for the Home Office, said 'there is now a growing body of evidence to show that supervision and resettlement is more likely to be successful if offenders are offered employment or training.'" Another line in the draft version's Findings, Policy and Strategy section which was later omitted was: "The Home Office recognise that employment contributes to the successful rehabilitation of offenders".

There are further examples such as: "{The Prison Service} considers work to be one of the principle means of reducing reoffending post release."

Godfrey Allen, chief executive of the Apex Trust, refused to comment on suggestions that the report had been "knobbled". "We have been commissioned to do a piece of work. It's their report and its up to them what they do with it and when they publish it," he said.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "This change smacks of ministerial censorship.

"The report shows clearly that the best way of preventing future crimes is jobs and employment. That view is clearly endorsed by the Minister in the first draft."

A Home Office spokesman said the report was commissioned to look at what was happening within offender employment, and that the final version was the responsibility of Apex. She added that the report was not connected in any way with the vetting issue.

Five months' work goes in tax

The average British employee will have to work from 1 January to 24 May next year to pay off his or her tax bill, a report out today claims.

Every year, the right-wing think-tank the Adam Smith Institute calculates how long people "slave for the benefit of the Treasury" and comes up with what it calls "tax-freedom day". In 1996 the date was 23 May – but it was a leap year and had an extra day.

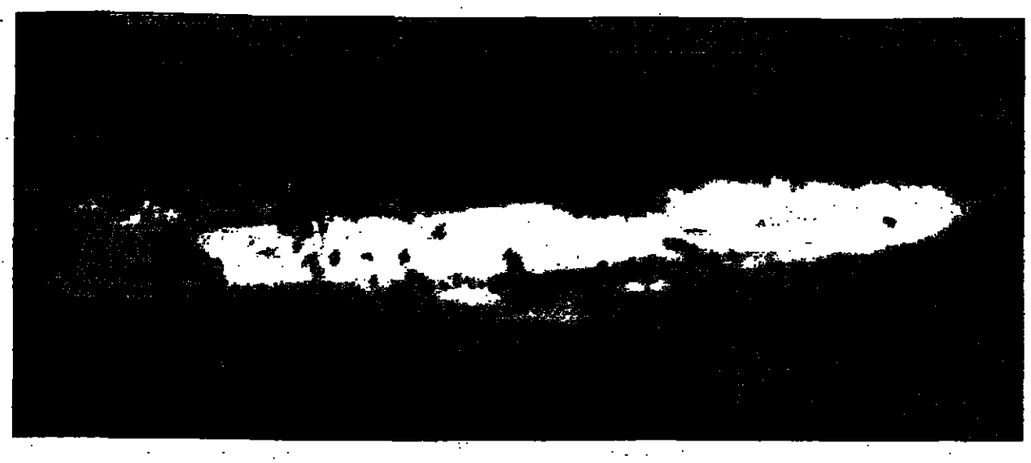
The institute's report states: "Nearly 40 per cent of our national income will be swallowed up in taxes in 1997. That means we will work nearly five whole months for the taxman before we can finally start working for ourselves."

Tax freedom day would fall on Saturday 24 May next year, it said. That is more than a week later than the 1993 low of 15 May, but considerably earlier than in 1985, when tax freedom day was 1 June. The tax burden was a lot lighter 30 years ago – in 1965, tax freedom day fell on 29 April.

However, other countries in Europe are worse off. The European Union average for tax freedom is 5 June, while people in Denmark have to work until the end of July just to pay off their taxes, the institute said.

The report states: "The Government is currently, and with some success, attempting to bring the public sector finances back into balance. But this is done partly through higher taxation and only partly through lower expenditure.

"If the higher tax path continues to be chosen, Britain could still end up as a high-tax economy, less attractive for foreign investors and less friendly to home-grown entrepreneurs. Such a trend could only be described as deeply disturbing."



British yachtsman in ocean rescue drama

James Cusick and Stuart Alexander

British round-the-world yachtsman Pete Goss is to be compensated for his selfless act of heroism in rescuing a French race colleague whose boat sunk in treacherous conditions in the Southern Ocean.

Organisers of the non-stop Vendee Globe race praised the bravery of the former Royal Marine and confirmed that the time he spent saving the life of Raphael Dinelli by taking a 150-mile diversion will be taken into account in the final positions.

Dangerous waters: The area of Southern Ocean where Goss (left) rescued Dinelli

Goss, 35, an award-winning ocean yachtsman who holds the record for the smallest catamaran to cross the Atlantic, was lying seventh in the single-handed global race when he put aside his dreams of victory and sailed to the rescue of Dinelli. Race director Philippe Jeantot, speaking from Paris, said: "All at headquarters salute his courage and determination."

The 28-year-old Frenchman was stranded in a liferaft that was dropped to him by a Australian air-sea rescue plane after his yacht *Algimouss* began to sink, 1,400 miles south-west of Perth.

In fading light on Boxing Day, Goss carried out a systematic triangular search pattern to locate the raft. When Mr Dinelli's boat sank, his chances of surviving would have been regarded a slim. Although modern satellite locating equipment is accurate, there is no commercial shipping in that area of the Southern Ocean. It is also well out of helicopter range. His only hope lay in a fellow competitor.

When not racing, Goss lives at St Germans, Cornwall, with his wife Tracey and their three children. He sold his house and ran up debts of more than £80,000 to fulfil a 10-year ambition to take part in the Vendee race. His 50ft sloop, *Aqua Quorian*, is the smallest in the field.

Goss was the first to respond to a mayday call put out by the ailing French vessel, and he eventually found Dinelli's liferaft drifting mid-ocean in conditions close to freezing point at 11.40pm (GMT) on Thursday. Race organiser, Laurie Gallizzi, said: "Pete went straight away in the direction of Raphael when he heard what had happened. Every hour from then on he sent us a fax to say how he was going. He sailed there really fast, we were surprised at how quickly he got near to the spot where Mr Dinelli was."

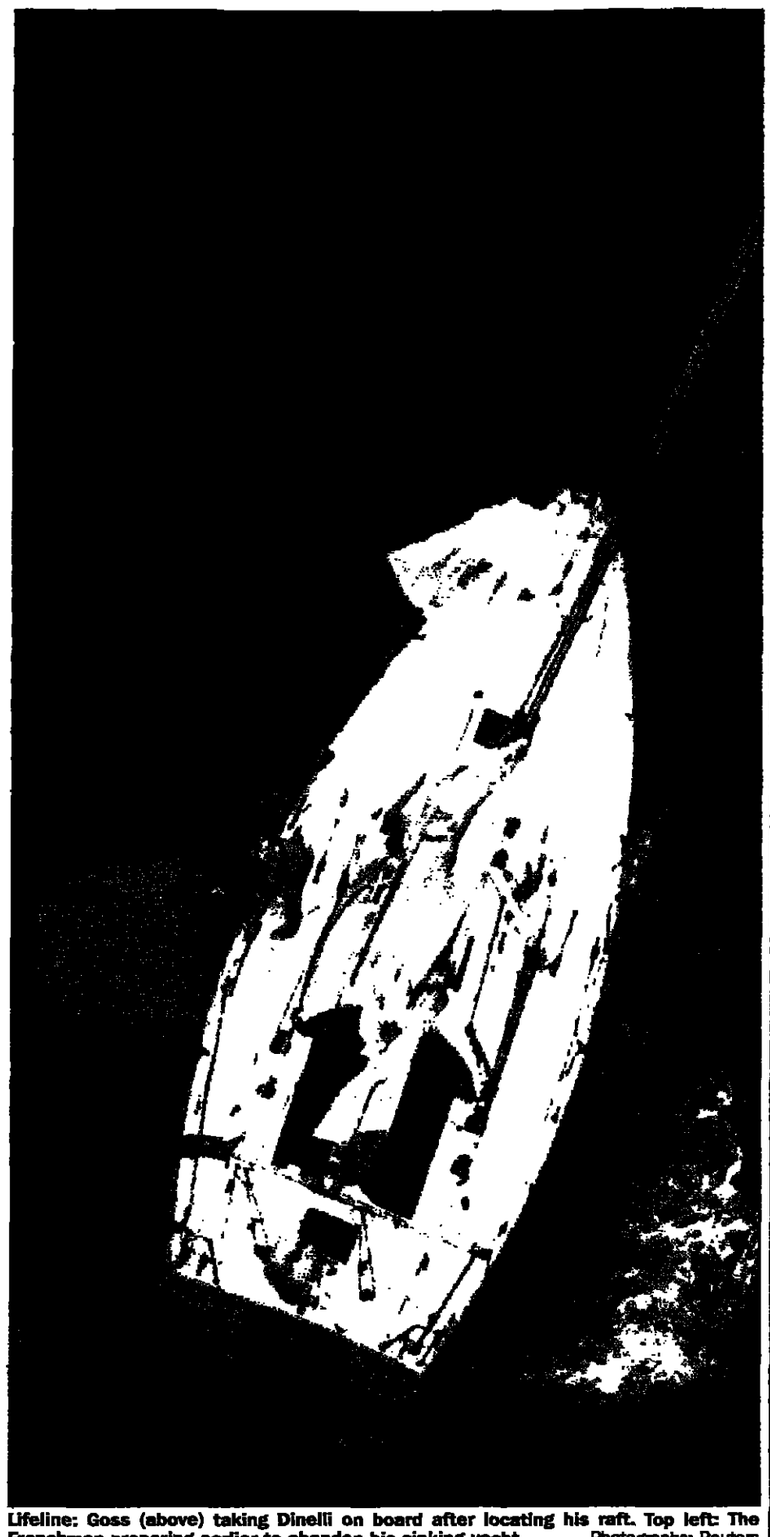
A message sent on satellite fax from the British yacht confirmed the rescue. "I have just had the best Christmas present ever. Raphael is on board. He is very cold and happy. I've just given him a cup of tea." It is understood that the Frenchman suffered only minor injuries, including a knock to his head. When his vessel capsized, winds in the area were thought to have been gusting at up to 75mph.

On both occasions that the Vendee race has been held, French boats have triumphed, and this time was expected to be no exception. Before the crews set off, however, Goss said: "The French don't own single-handed sailing. We're going to take them on and win."

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority confirmed the rescue and said the Frenchman was in good spirits, suffering only from mild hypothermia. A spokesman said: "Their intention is to head for Hobart, Tasmania, to offload Raphael." This will probably be done by either by a specialist helicopter or rescue craft transfer.

During the race the two men are understood to have developed a developed a close bond. Earlier in the race, the Frenchman helped Goss by keeping in radio contact for several days after his satellite fax broke down.

Mr Goss, an ocean racing professional, finished second in his class in this year's single-handed transatlantic race and is currently seventh out of the 10 competitors remaining from the original field of 14 yachts which left the French port of Les Sables d'Olonne on 3 November. They are due back in February or March after their 22,000-mile marathon.



Lifeline: Goss (above) taking Dinelli on board after locating his raft. Top left: The Frenchman preparing earlier to abandon his sinking yacht Photographs: Reuters

Palace attacks Diana advert

Marianne Macdonald
Media Correspondent

An advertisement showing the Princess of Wales wearing leather and carrying a whip – coupled with an exhortation to have "a spanking New Year" – has elicited a protest from the head of the Queen's household.

The Palace issued the complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority on behalf of the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Airlie, after seeing the composite photograph to promote the satirical magazine, *Insider*.

The move may surprise those who thought the Princess was no longer part of the Royal Family, but a Palace spokesman said the fact that the Prince and Princess of Wales were divorced made no difference.

"It is against the Lord Chamberlain's rules and guidelines, which are applicable to all advertisers, to use images of the Royal Family without permission for commercial purposes," he said.

"The Princess of Wales remains a member of the Royal Family, as the announcement of the divorce arrangements made clear, as the former wife of the heir to the throne and the mother of the Princes."

The advertisement appeared in London's *Evening Standard* on December 17. It showed the Princess, now holidaying in the Caribbean, wearing a black leather top and carrying a whip. Headlined "Royal gift shock", a speech bubble from Diana's mouth said: "I thought I said M & S".

Insider was started by John Bird, founder of *The Big Issue*, the magazine to help the homeless, Tony Elliott, founder of listings magazine, *Time Out*, and journalist Tim Satchell, who is both editor and publisher.

Mr Satchell said: "It is a beautiful, witty photograph of a beautiful, witty woman. We have not yet had the full text of the complaint, but there was no intention to mislead.

"We are a magazine of wit and the Princess is well-known for her sense of humour."

The Princess's office is understood to have been informed about the matter before she left for the Caribbean.

news

Swan lake gives new dimension to Capability's vision

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

Walkers who work off the turkey and pudding at Wimpole, near Cambridge, this Christmas will find the North Park returned to a design close to that left by "Capability" Brown more than 200 years ago.

Brown was one of a series of landscape architects to leave his mark on the home of the Earls of Hardwicke which was bequeathed to the National Trust by Elsie Bambridge, daughter of Rudyard Kipling.

The Trust has just completed a £120,000 restoration project, which involved dredging two lakes created by Brown in the 1760s, tree planting, improvements to public access and the return of an arable field to grass.

The two lakes, at the centre of 350 acres of parkland that attract thousands of walkers each year, are the most dramatic aspect of the transformation. Where for a lifetime there have been trees, thickets and reed beds, there is now open water.

Little interest was shown in the lakes after a dam on the lower one was breached 60 years ago. Scrub took hold. The lower lake as good as disappeared – "an impenetrable jungle beneath full-grown willows", according to Graham Damant, the Wimpole property manager. The upper one became heavily silted up and covered in reeds.

Mud down to a depth of seven feet was dredged from the four-acre upper lake and down to four feet from the slightly smaller lower one. Spread across 10 acres of adjoining hillside, it has raised the ground level by an average of two feet.

Mr Damant has watched teal, tufted duck, mute swans and other birds return to the lakes. A kingfisher darts from the overhanging branches. The upper lake has been stocked with small carp. It was a fish pond in the 1600s before Brown extended it.

Wimpole, which also has a working farm with rare breeds of sheep, cattle and pigs, does not draw on the Trust's central funds. Money for the restoration project came from a variety of sources, including a Countryside Commission grant, donations and the proceeds of an on-going second-hand book sale at the hall.

The last of the great landscape designers to work at Wimpole was Humphry Repton. He developed Brown's informal landscape and in his *Red Book* of 1801 contrasted the woodland and hillsides of the estate with the flat cornfields of much of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon. It was, he wrote, "like a flower in the desert, beautiful in itself, but more beautiful by its situation".

Not all of Repton's vision will feature in the restoration. Lying in a fold, the lakes are hidden from the view of the hall. The great designer proposed a boat so that its mast would be seen by the earl's guests and indicate the presence of water. But for the Trust's arbiters of taste, a boat was thought inappropriate.

Former glory: The upper lake at Wimpole, which has been restored to a body of open water after decades as a muddy swamp Photograph: John Voos

Union acts over jail searches of visitors

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

The Prison Service could face legal action in the wake of a flood of complaints from probation officers subjected to intrusive physical searches when visiting jails on official duties.

The National Association of Probation Officers (Napo), the officers' union, is consulting lawyers over whether some of the searches amount to assault.

"Rub-down" searches – which have included examinations of ears, mouths, hair, inside legs, shoes and breast and waistband areas – were introduced last autumn. By this month more than 60 officers, the majority women, had formally complained to the prison authorities.

The instructions at Belmarsh high category prison, in south-east London, says that the searches of probation staff are "designed to give a thorough examination to satisfy the searcher that no item is concealed in their clothing." There is no evidence, however, of probation staff being involved in illegal activity.

A parliamentary answer in 1989 disclosed that 10 prison officers and other staff members had been interviewed in connection with drug trafficking in prisons during the previous decade. While the number of arrests for drug smuggling by visitors has rocketed to 1,289 in 1995, the Prison Service has stopped differentiating between domestic and professional visits when compiling its statistics.

Harry Fletcher, Napo's assistant general secretary, said: "We suspect that the real reason for the searches is connected with the Prison Service's attitude to probation officers. At one jail a female officer was told that probation was seen as the friend of the prisoner and therefore likely to take in contraband."

A Prison Service spokesman insisted that random pat-down searches of all visitors had been introduced in response to the Woodcock report into the jail escape from Whitemoor, Cambridgeshire, in September 1994. "Probation officers spend a lot more time going in and out of prisons," the spokesman said. "Our outstanding consideration is security."

Three recent cases in particular have prompted the union to seek advice on whether officers have been subjected to assault or grossly unreasonable treatment. In one incident at Belmarsh, a female prison officer put her fingers inside a female probation officer's bra and leggings, observed by a group of male solicitors and a female solicitor who were not searched.

In another search at the same prison, a male prison officer approached a female probation officer with a hand-held electronic metal-detecting wand, but the woman was instead subjected without warning to a search under her clothing by a female prison officer. Napo views both incidents as assaults.

In the third case, at Doncaster prison, the searching officer insisted on touching a female probation officer's ileostomy bag, in front of onlookers, asking what she had in her pockets.

Napo believes that police and immigration officers are far more likely to be "waved through" by jail security. Mr Fletcher said dozens of officers had walked out of prisons in protest and judges were now expressing concern because presentence court reports were not being completed.

In other cases officers have reported being sniffed by drugs dogs, while prison authorities have even considered asking women not to wear underwired bras because they set off alarms.

£1bn diet industry faces over-the-counter ban

A new clampdown on the slimming industry is to be considered by the House of Commons early in the New Year.

Alice Mahon, the Labour MP for Halifax, is poised to re-introduce a Bill which would make all diet and weight-loss pills and potions available on prescription only.

"People are in danger of poisoning themselves by this constant obsession to lose weight and be thin," Mrs Mahon said.

She added that unsupervised dieting could undermine a woman's physical and emotional wellbeing and could also lead to serious eating disorders and other problems. "Marilyn Monroe was the role model for my generation," she said. "She was a size 16 and she still is thought of as a goddess."

Mrs Mahon's original Bill was given a second reading in the Commons but was destroyed through lack of time in Parliament. "Now it is all set to go again," she said.

The booming British diet industry covers slimming clubs, magazines and books, is said to be worth more than £1bn.

Job stress worse among low-paid

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Job insecurity is just as stressful as unemployment, and contrary to the popular view has hit the working class far harder than professionals, according to a Cambridge University academic.

Not only have those at the bottom of the pile been forced to put up with a widening pay gap, they have also suffered the "double blow" of extreme anxiety over their employment prospects.

In a study to be published in the new year, Brendan Burchell of the Cambridge Faculty of Social and Political Sciences warns of the dangerous effects of this "polarisation" of the labour market on society. He has calculated that manual workers are 60 per cent more likely to move into insecure jobs than professionals.

The paper, "The Unequal Distribution of Job Insecurity", also points out that employment insecurity causes severe psychological problems, marital breakdowns and reduces life expectancy.

Mr Burchell, whose research is to be published in the *International Review of Applied Economics*, contends that there is no evidence to support the New Right's view that insecurity boosts workers' motivation. While a degree of concern about one's future may help productivity, real job insecurity has a negative impact on the output of most people, Mr Burchell argues.

And employees rarely "get used" to such stress. The effects become cumulatively worse as the years wear on. Insecurity feeds on itself, so that those who have experienced a period of unemployment enter a downward spiral, finding it more difficult to establish themselves in permanent jobs, partly through the negative attitudes of employers towards the jobless.

The paper points to a "stark break" between the relatively secure Sixties and Seventies and the labour market after 1979. In the Eighties there was a far higher risk of moving from a secure to an insecure employment. That was partly due to a deep recession which saw unemployment rise to levels more than three times as high as anything that had been experienced since the war.

Mr Burchell contends some of the insecurity was the responsibility of the Conservative government, which introduced legislation to make it easier for employers to dismiss their workers.

The study reports the existence of "Survivor Syndrome" among those left after redundancies. Among the survivors, researchers have found decreased motivation, morale, confidence and loyalty, and increased stress, anger and bitterness.

Peter Hain, Labour's employment spokesman, said the research proved his party's argument that deregulation of the market was a dangerous policy. "It doesn't produce greater efficiency and it has bred job insecurity which is not only bad for health, it also makes people less efficient and less likely to have the confidence to innovate," he said.

He continued: "It is clear there was a sea change in 1979 when the Conservatives came to power. Job insecurity is partly the result of global competition, but it was made far worse by the manic deregulation pushed through by the Tories stripping workers of their rights.

"It left people incredibly vulnerable. This research shows that life for many people – particularly those at the bottom of the pile – is poor, nasty, brutish and short."

£30m threat looms over good colleges

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

A steep three-year rise in the number of students attending further-education colleges could be slowed or even halted following Treasury threats to withdraw money for expansion.

The quango in charge of college funding is at loggerheads with officials from the Department for Education and Employment amid fears that the move could lose the sector up to £30m. College principals claim that axing extra funds for growth will place further strain on a sector already facing severe financial difficulties after meeting tough Government-set expansion targets.

They warn that removing money intended as an incentive for colleges to create new demand for training, from industry and the public, will damage efforts to help Britain reach ambitious education and training targets set for the millennium.

The pot of money under threat is available to successful colleges which fulfil their student recruitment goals but which want to expand further. Introduced three years ago and worth tens of millions annually, the pot has so far effectively been an open cheque underwritten by the Treasury.

However, a sharp increase in the number of claims on the fund in the past financial year is understood to have caused alarm among ministers, prompting threats to reduce the money available or remove it altogether.

If the pot is abolished, the colleges quango, the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), could be told to reallocate its existing funds to help the sector meet continuing tough growth targets. However, the FEFC insisted that this year's budget settlement for further education did no more than allow the sector to stand still.

Colleges had been warned by the FEFC that the growth fund could eventually be reviewed, but there was no suggestion that it would disappear before 1998-1999. Under proposals now being considered, it could be withdrawn from this April.

Further-education colleges, which currently educate more than 3 million full-time and part-time students, have increased their rolls by 6 per cent a year since 1993, when they became independent of local-authority control.

But the strain of expanding, while also making 20 per cent efficiency gains, is beginning to show, with almost 300 colleges slipping into the red last year. The proportion of colleges on a "sick list", indicating real financial difficulty, rose to around one in eight.

A spokeswoman for the Department for Education and Employment confirmed that discussions were going on with the FEFC, but said the Government envisaged "continuing growth in the sector".

Roger Ward, chief executive of the Association of Colleges, called any move to reduce or abolish the fund a "disaster", claiming it could lose colleges tens of millions of pounds each year. "The sector was inspired by the Government to expand on the understanding this money was available," he said.

"We have fulfilled our part of the contract and it is inconceivable that ministers should renege on theirs."

■ A college principal and marketing director who were sacked after reports that they were running a pub while on sick leave are considering challenging their dismissal at a tribunal.

Neil Preston, the £90,000-a-year chief executive of Stoke-on-Trent College, and the assistant director Helen Chandler, were sacked without notice on Christmas Eve following an investigation by a special committee of governors. They could win a cash settlement if the procedures used to dismiss them are found to be unfair.

The college is to sack 200 staff after uncovering a £8m shortfall in its funds caused by failing to hit its recruitment targets.

Happy days: Pete Bounds and Max, an alsatian-collie cross, surfing off West Dale beach in Pembrokshire Photograph: Rob Stratton

Max the four-footed surfer is lost

One of Britain's biggest canine stars is missing. Max the surfing dog vanished from outside a supermarket in west Wales while his owner Pete Bounds was inside buying his pet's Christmas dinner, **writes Richard Smith.**

The four-year-old mongrel, who won the Pro Dog charity's Pet of the Year award, rose to fame last summer through his devotion to Mr Bounds, 47, Britain's former surfing team captain. Every time his owner went out surfing, Max whimpered on the beach. So Mr Bounds taught Max to surf with him – giving him his own wet suit and board.

But when Mr Bounds went into Haverfordwest to buy Max a steak on Christmas Eve the dog was tied to railings outside. "I was only in the supermarket for a couple of minutes but when I came back Max had gone," Mr Bounds said. He is convinced the dog was stolen. "I'm absolutely shattered ... I miss him terribly."

Mr Bounds has spent all Christmas searching for Max, and has put up 200 posters offering a £100 reward for his safe return. Dyfed Powys police asked anyone with information about Max to contact Haverfordwest police station.

Gonzalez boosts Serb opposition

Kurt Schork
Reuter

Belgrade – Anti-government demonstrators and riot police clashed in the Serbian capital Belgrade yesterday after Serbian opposition claims that it was robbed of recent local election victories gained important international backing.

Witnesses said police, some in plain clothes, used batons in street fights with the protesters, who jeered as they left the demonstration past cordons of riot police. At least one person was beaten unconscious, and a man who said he was walking home from a medical conference received an open head-wound, eyewitnesses said.

A mother and her 12-year-old daughter were slightly injured, and two foreign television crews had their cameras smashed. A reporter from the independent Radio Index said:

Poll observers' verdict lifts spirits after police block demonstrations

"It seems riot police are intervening in response to jeering. No other provocation took place."

The former Spanish prime minister, Felipe Gonzalez, representing the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), confirmed opposition victories over Slobodan Milosevic and his ruling Socialist party (SPS) in Belgrade and 14 other towns.

Soon after Mr Gonzalez announced his verdict in Geneva, the news spread to Belgrade and supporters of the opposition Zajedno (Together) coalition who were participating in the 38th day of protest marches.

The crowd of some 80,000 danced and cheered Mr Gonzalez's report, which added weight to mounting international demands that President Milosevic respect democracy.

Mr Gonzalez, who headed an OSCE mission to Belgrade this month, called on the 53-nation grouping to issue an "urgent appeal" to the authorities and political forces in Yugoslavia to "comply with the will expressed at the polls by the citizens". He said the authorities should accept opposition victories in 22 disputed municipalities, including nine in Belgrade.

Opposition leaders were sceptical that Mr Milosevic would respond to the Gonzalez report. "We do not expect him to accept the findings of this commission. We expect further escalation and aggravation of this political crisis," said Zoran Djindjic, leader of the opposition Democratic Party.

Defiant: Students barred by riot police from protesting in the centre of Belgrade imitate prisoners Photograph: Ivan Milutinovic/Reuter

The official Tanjug news agency reported that Mr Gonzalez confirmed the SPS and its allies won a majority of the votes but did not refer to his endorsement of Zajedno victories.

Weeks of processions through the centre of Belgrade ended on Thursday when riot police cleared the streets and forced demonstrators back into a pedestrian square.

Despite international warnings to allow the marches to continue, the authorities also curtailed yesterday's march by the opposition coalition.

The Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic said the OSCE had delivered a "balanced" report on the elections, but had confused some facts when it visited Belgrade.

Mr Milutinovic said the most important feature of the report was that it called for dialogue "within the framework of the system" and "discussion between the authorities and the opposition in parliament."

Top German weekly was a Nazi haven

Imre Karacs
Bonn

Germany's leading news weekly, founded by British occupation forces after the war in an effort to foster liberal values, saw the world through brown-tinted spectacles in its early years, and operated as an advice centre for Nazis on the run.

To mark *Spiegel*'s 50th anniversary next week, the Berlin newspaper *Tageszeitung* published documents yesterday listing prominent Nazis who held senior positions in the 1950s. The international department was headed by a former SS officer who helped plan the invasion of Britain; the foreign editor, another SS man, was a top agent in occupied Norway.

The Berlin correspondent was in his previous incarnation a Nazi official in charge of the foreign press corps. *Spiegel*'s Latin America correspondent, Wilfred von Oven, also had excellent contacts among the burgeoning German diaspora on his patch. During the war he was chief adjutant to Goebbels.

The magazine's SS contingent knew each other before the war and had first met in Königsberg, formerly East Prussia, while developing the theology of "Scientific National Socialism". One of them, Horst Mahnke, was charged at the Nuremberg war-crimes trials with the murder of 38 Jewish intellectuals in Russia in 1941.

During the war he was in the group that developed Operation Sealion, the proposed invasion of Britain. His job was to draw up lists of British Jews, MPs and other "undesirables". Had Hitler invaded, Mahnke was the man marked out to implement Britain's "purification".

In 1952 he joined *Spiegel* as international editor, and remained on staff until 1959, when he switched to another magazine. He retired as chief business manager of the Association of German Magazine Publishers, and died in 1985 a thoroughly respected man.

His SS chum Georg Wolff, who spent the war in Norway, retired from *Spiegel* in the 1970s after a glittering career and died last summer.

Long after the war, he continued to hold curiously familiar views, as he betrayed in an essay about Africa: "The Negro is intelligent, skilful and eager to learn, but he is lazy," Wolff said in a scholarly journal.

Karl Friedrich Grosse, the Berlin correspondent, and von Oven in Latin America also clung on to their respectability, despite attempts to expose their pasts. As senior figures in Germany's most powerful media organ, *Spiegel*'s Nazis were well-placed to deflect public campaigns against relics of the Third Reich. The network looked after its own, frequently springing to the defence of any member of the fraternity under attack.

Spiegel: Founded by British to foster liberal values

The boys from Königsberg turned their magazine into a "letter-box" for the Nazi élite, littering the pages with coded messages. *Spiegel* functioned, according to *Tageszeitung*, as a "beacon in the democratic state", helping Nazis to find their bearings in the new world.

They did their job well. The Nazis became democrats, and *Spiegel*, the fearless, somewhat pompous, champion of liberal principles, remains the most influential magazine today, selling 1 million copies a week.

Church suicide ended tragic life

Imre Karacs

The secrets of the woman who blew herself up on Christmas Eve during a church service in Frankfurt, Germany, were pieced together yesterday by the police, shedding light on the unbearable pain that led to the tragedy. It now seems certain that she lit herself as a human torch in memory of her son who had leapt in front of a train at the age of 18.

The son's suicide in November 1989, at a spot near the church where his mother paid the ultimate tribute, had unhinged her mind. She received psychiatric help from time to time, but never got over his death. Last year came the final blow: the emotional strain of his death destroyed her marriage, and she was declared unfit to care for the couple's other child, a nine-year-old girl.

A search of her flat yielded no clues, only testimonies from neighbours that she was reclusive, weighed down by sorrow. Out of respect for the family, police refused to name her, though one newspaper yesterday published her first name and the initial of her surname.

She must have been planning her exit for a long time. The means of self-destruction, two Yugoslav-made hand grenades containing 100 grammes of TNT each, could not have been bought, in the words of the police, "in a store".

Misfortune followed her to the very end. Investigators are now certain that she intended to kill only herself, and was oblivious to the grenades' lethal force. "She held the grenades on her lap and probably wanted to direct the explosion only against her own body," said a police spokesman.

Instead, she brought grief to families she never knew. Two sisters, aged 59 and 61, were killed in the blast and 13 people were injured, including a girl of 12 who will never fully recover.

France quits watch over northern Iraq

Mary Dejevsky
Paris
Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent
Rupert Cornwell
Washington

France is pulling out of allied surveillance operations over northern Iraq following what it says is a change in the brief. A foreign ministry statement in Paris yesterday said the decision had been taken because the "humanitarian aspect originally envisaged" for the mission had been dropped.

"Operation Provide Comfort" will be continued jointly by the other participants, the United States, Turkey and Britain. It was started in 1991 after the end of the Gulf War with the joint aim of protecting the Kurds of northern Iraq and ensuring that Iraq observed the terms of the cease-fire. Its mandate expires on 31 December, after which France will no longer be involved.

The Turkish parliament met on Christmas Day to consider whether it should continue in the light of changed circumstances. These include Saddam Hussein's attack on Arbil, which forced the withdrawal of some of the multinational ground forces in northern Iraq, and fighting between the Kurdish factions which the international operation was protecting. Some of these factions went over to Saddam's side.

While allowing Provide Comfort to continue from its base at Incirlik, the Turks still refuse British aid agencies access to northern Iraq. They have also discontinued the provision for ground reconnaissance. French officials had argued that without this provision, the operation would be purely military and as such France would be unlikely to approve it.

France's concern to improve its diplomatic and commercial relations with Iraq is believed to lie at the heart of its decision. Paris was recently instrumental in persuading Baghdad to meet UN conditions for recommencing oil exports.

Heavy over-spending on its overseas military budget, which includes participation in the expensive peace-keeping operation in Bosnia, may be another factor. Air force training flights were recently suspended because the annual fuel budget had been exhausted. France is retrenching its military presence around the world because its forces are over-stretched and it must pay for the costly transition to an all-professional military on the British model to which President Chirac has committed himself.

The French decision was seized on by Iraq yesterday as marking a split in the six-and-a-half-year-old Gulf War coalition. Although the operation is nominally humanitarian, it has clearly become a surveillance mission enabling the Gulf War allies to hit Saddam Hussein any time he moves.

The British Foreign Office yesterday said it "noted the French position" but that the air surveillance operation continued to do useful work and should continue. In practice, France, like Britain, provides only a small air force – six planes – as its contribution to the operation, which is overwhelmingly American. France's contribution to the operation over southern Iraq, south of 33rd parallel, remains unaffected.

Although the French Foreign Ministry said France continued to enjoy "excellent" relations with Washington, France and the US have clashed recently over command arrangements in Nato's Southern Command, based in Naples. The French said a "European" – probably a Frenchman – should have command. Senior US military sources said they would be happy as long as the French put the resources into the Mediterranean to justify that, which there is no sign they will ever do.

France's decision to pull out of Operation Provide Comfort has annoyed and embarrassed the Clinton administration.

The dispute adds to a list of differences between the two allies, ranging from the Middle East to the handling of the Zaire refugee crisis, the US-led ousting of Boutros Boutros-Ghali as UN Secretary General and what Washington insists was a calculated personal snub by France to the outgoing Secretary of State, Warren Christopher.

Bowing out: French forces will no longer participate in the operation in Kurdistan Photograph: Rex Features

Help ordered for needy as French freeze kills five

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

Local authorities across France were ordered yesterday to provide more help for people sleeping rough after five people died from cold over the Christmas period. The instruction came from the minister for emergency humanitarian action, Xavier Emmanuelli, in response to mounting public indignation that people could die in such circumstances in Nineties France.

Four of the five dead were homeless people in their fifties and sixties. Two died in central Paris, one in the doorway of an apartment block being refurbished. A third was found dead in a park in the centre of Brest, while the fourth, a woman, was found close to the station in the western town of Treport. The fifth was a pensioner who lived in a caravan in the Paris region.

Much of France has been in the grip of icy weather since Christmas Eve, when snow – and torrential rain and hail in the south – disrupted holiday travel arrangements for thousands. Even in Paris, temperatures have not ventured above zero for three days, and the cold spell is forecast to continue at least into early next week at least.

The current temperatures, minus 8C in Paris yesterday, and minus 14-15C in eastern and central France, are up to 10 degrees colder than average for the time of year.

Paris and other French cities already have extensive emergency arrangements for homeless people and others sleeping rough in winter. As well as hostels, a number of central Paris underground stations are kept open through the night, and hundreds of charity soup kitchens, known as *restaurants du coeur*, are open from mid-December to mid-March for those of limited means.

This year, however, charity workers say that there has been a sharp increase in those wanting to use the soup kitchens and many borderline cases have had to be turned away. As in Britain, additional events are organised over Christmas and New Year – on Christmas Eve, 1,500 of the Paris homeless were entertained to Christmas dinner on five Seine cruise boats, while another 1,000 are to be given a new year dinner in the precincts of the vast science centre in the north-east of the city.

Conscious, no doubt of the poor standing of the government, several ministers presided at charitable Christmas dinners in the towns and districts where they are also the local mayor (and invited the television cameras).

Yet in Paris yesterday, there was space to spare in emergency accommodation for the homeless. One middle-aged man said he was not going anywhere near a hostel because he would have to give up his dog.

significant shorts

Peru hostages see no end to their ordeal

More than 100 hostages completed 10 days in the besieged Japanese embassy in Lima yesterday with no solution in sight. Guerrillas of the Tupac Amaru group said they had another unit ready to hit other targets if President Alberto Fujimori tries force to free the captors. He declared an emergency in the capital, apparently to make it easier to arrest suspected guerrillas or sympathisers. *Phil Davison*

South Korean workers defy police threats

Despite threats of a police crackdown, 370,000 striking workers vowed to continue South Korea's largest union protest. Workers shut hundreds of plants over their demand that the government retract a bill making lay-offs easier, and the strikes threatened to inflict major damage on South Korea's economy. Thousands of riot police with tear-gas guarded the entrances of the National Assembly a few blocks away. *AP – Seoul*

Genocide trial opens

Rwanda's first genocide trial opened, with the accused facing the death penalty if convicted of slaughtering 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 1994. An ex-medical assistant, Deo Bizimana, and Egide Gatanazi, a former administrator, are charged with organising the killing of 75 per cent of the country's Tutsis. *Reuter – Nairobi*

Asylum bid denied

The Foreign Office denied eight protesters escorted by Malaysian police from the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur on Christmas Day had requested asylum. The demonstrators, from Indonesia's troubled Aceh province, are now in detention, according to their lawyer, and face expulsion to Indonesia. *Raymond Whitaker*

Guatemalan guerrillas sign up for peace after 36-year war

End of an era: Children in Guatemala City join in the chanting of URNG guerrilla slogans, in advance of the peace treaty Photograph: Kimberly White/Reuters

Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent

A war that began the year John F Kennedy was elected, and Harold MacMillan was heralding "the winds of change", will finally end tomorrow when Guatemala's government and guerrillas sign a hard-won peace treaty. In 36 years of Latin America's longest guerrilla war, 100,000 people died, 40,000 more "disappeared" from military detention and more than a million fled their homes.

At least 11 Latin American heads of state, possibly including Cuba's Fidel Castro, will watch President Alvaro Arzu and four guerrilla commanders sign the so-called Agreement for a Firm and Lasting Peace in the National Palace in Guatemala City.

Although the guerrillas of the so-called Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) are still armed, they will gather in eight designated camps within the next few weeks to hand in their weapons to international peace monitors.

Most plan to stay with the URNG when it becomes a political movement, as envisaged in one of the 11 chapters of a peace treaty which took five years to reach. They will thus follow in the footsteps of their Sandinista and FMLN neighbours in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Although the peace process began five years ago, its speedy conclusion was largely due to an atmosphere of trust created by Mr Arzu, a 51-year-old former travel agent of part-Russian extraction, after he took over in January. The last and most controversial accord was completed only last week when Guatemala's Congress approved the Law of National Reconciliation – a sweeping amnesty that will exempt guerrillas, military officers and anti-guerrilla village militiamen from prosecution for massacres, kidnappings or torture.

The law infuriated local and international human-rights groups who note that, while the guerrillas were often brutal with soldiers or collaborators, it was the military and the militias who were responsible for the majority of the 36-year toll of torture, death and disappearances, mostly of civilians. It will, for example, grant impunity to the officers who carried out a "scorched-earth" policy against alleged guerrilla sympathisers in the Guatemalan highlands, at the height of the war in the Eighties. Using techniques learnt from United States experience against supposed pro-Viet-Cong villages in Vietnam, the policy involved burning down entire villages suspected of collaborating with, or even of feeding guerrilla units. Also apparently exempt from punishment will be military officers who ordered or carried out the so-called Xaman massacre little over a year ago. An army platoon opened fire on 200 unarmed men, women and children, killing 11 and wounding 30.

The seeds of the 36-year war were sown in 1954 when the CIA helped overthrow the leftist President Jacobo Arbenz, a coup which led to three decades of military or military-controlled governments. Marxist guerrilla groups were formed, merging into the umbrella URNG, and encouraged by Castro's 1959 revolution to launch their first attacks.

In the early Eighties, the government launched the "scorched earth" policy which sent hundreds of thousands fleeing through jungle to Mexico. Thousands are still there.

The official terrorism campaign worked. The guerrillas lost support and were reduced to blowing up bridges and pylons, as well as extorting "war taxes" from ranchers. That was effectively a protection racket that ensured the guerrillas' survival.

Many Guatemalans fear that some guerrillas will remain outside the law – as some ex-Contra and ex-Sandinista fighters have done in Nicaragua – believing they can live better through extortion than through promised state assistance.

Russia and China agree troop cuts

Teresa Poole
Peking
Helen Womack
Moscow

After seven years of talks, involving 22 meetings, China, Russia and three other former Soviet republics have finally reached agreement on reducing military forces along their borders. The troop-reduction pact is likely to be signed in April when China's President, Jiang Zemin, will make a state visit to Moscow.

Yesterday's agreement was negotiated in Peking but coincided with a meeting in Moscow between the Chinese Prime Minister, Li Peng, and the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will be the other nations signatory to the agreement.

No details were available yesterday on the number of troops involved. China and the former Soviet republics share a border of more than 2,500 miles which during the 1960s saw clashes between the world's two biggest Communist powers. Most of the disputes on border demarcation were settled five years ago, but the issue of troop reduction has proved more intractable.

In April, during a visit by Mr Yeltsin to Peking, the five nations signed a confidence-building treaty under which they must inform each other about military manoeuvres near the border, and in which they promise not to attack each other. Agreement was also reached to set up a hotline between Peking and Moscow.

Sino-Russian ties are at their most cordial for decades. Both sides want to see expanded trade and economic links, including Russian arms sales to China. Mr Li went on to meet the Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin and the two leaders signed a number of deals, ranging from the supply of Russian warplanes and building a nuclear power station in China to an accord between the two countries' central banks.

Both Moscow and Peking also see each other as a diplomatic ballast to counterbalance each country's bilateral relations with the United States.

For Mr Yeltsin, yesterday provided the first opportunity since recovery from his heart bypass operation to resume meetings with foreign leaders. Television showed the Russian leader looking reasonably fit and greeting Mr Li warmly.

"I am very pleased with the course of events," a thinner but apparently healthier Mr Yeltsin said in brief remarks broadcast on television. Mr Li and Mr Chernomyrdin agreed to meet each other twice a year to monitor progress on building up trade and diplomatic relations.

"We laid a good foundation for the next century and the next millennium," Interfax news agency quoted Mr Chernomyrdin as saying.

Dictator Stalin was softie and cry-baby

Moscow (AP) — After 60 years as a Kremlin maid, Polina Malinkina has issued her verdict on its best-known inhabitants.

The dictator Josef Stalin was a "kind" man often ready to break into tears. His feared security chief, Lavrenty Beria, was "weird". "He tore all the papers on his desk into small pieces and tossed them around his office," she said.

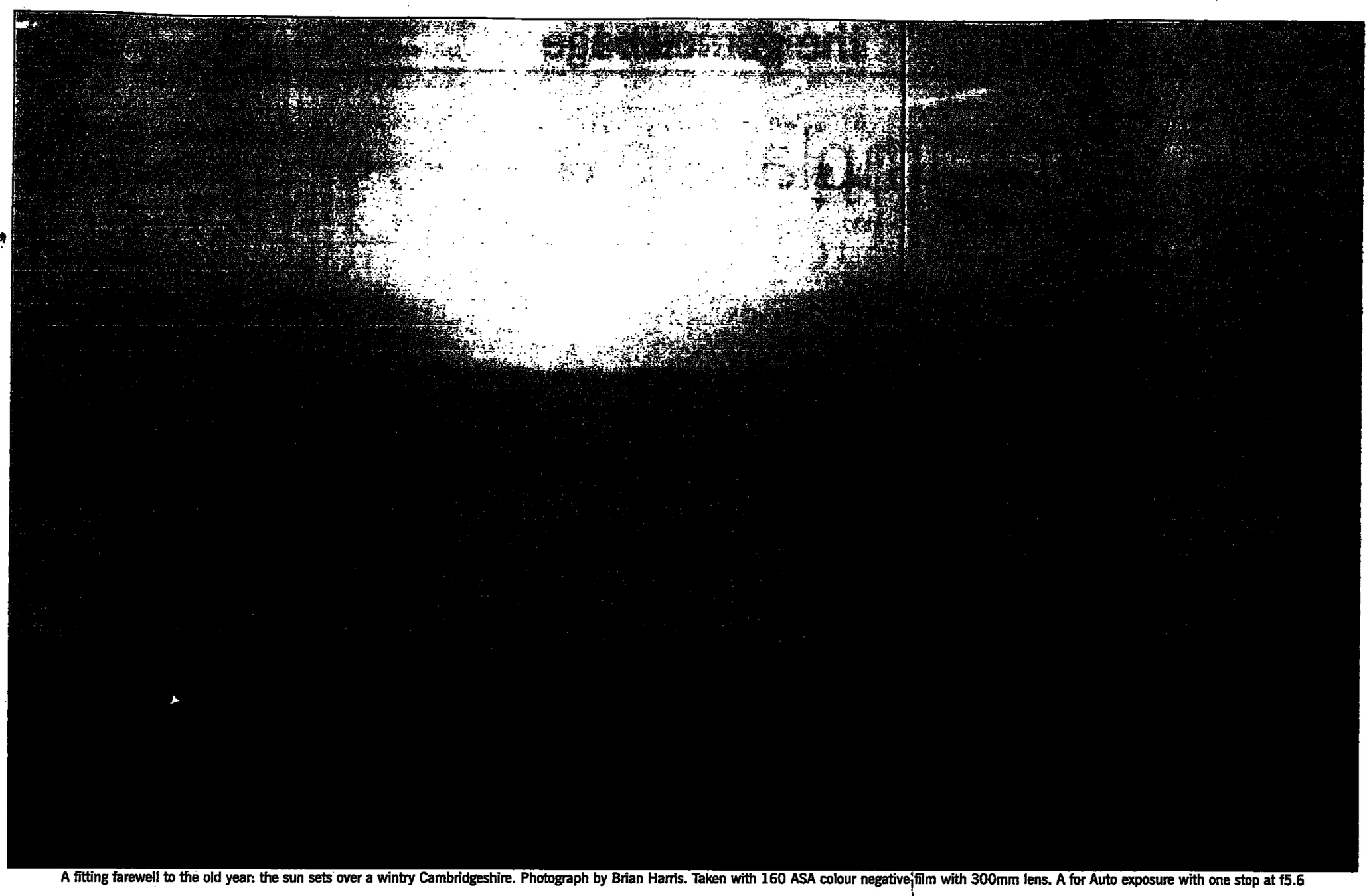
And the current President, Boris Yeltsin, sometimes sneaks off to a church in the Kremlin's grounds, she said in an interview published yesterday in the daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

"I've heard he secretly visits the church and is praying quietly so that [Communist leader Gennady] Zyuganov doesn't see him," she said. "Can you rule Russia without God?"

Ms Malinkina, who is in her eighties and still works at the Kremlin, said she is so well-known that only she and Mr Yeltsin are not asked to show identification when entering the building. She joined the Kremlin staff in the winter of 1937 at the height of Stalin's purges, which claimed countless lives, but said she never feared him. "He was a very short man and so kind too," she said. "He had a very tender look and his eyes were often full of tears. He had such a pity for simple people." Ms Malinkina is a religious woman, and said the only time Stalin offended her was when he ordered a church bell to be thrown off a Kremlin bell tower.

For her, all Kremlin dwellers fall into two categories: those who wipe their feet at the door and those who don't. Mr Yeltsin falls into the first, along with Stalin and former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.

Ms Malinkina, nicknamed "Baba Polya", said that her only dream, unfulfilled after 60 years, was to get a telephone in her apartment. "What if they need me urgently at the Kremlin?" she said.



A fitting farewell to the old year: the sun sets over a wintry Cambridgeshire. Photograph by Brian Harris. Taken with 160 ASA colour negative film with 300mm lens. A for Auto exposure with one stop at f5.6

thelongweekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 28 DECEMBER 1996

How appropriate to end the year with a sunset glowing bravely through the chilly dark of an East Anglian dusk. Just as the years come and go, the ritual of consumption reaches its feverish height with New Year's Eve parties and, of course, the sales. You could ignore their seductive tug on your already overworked credit card by searching for cheap works of art (cheap, yes; art, arguable) at that Nineties' phenomenon, the car boot sale, or decide to spend your money on disappearing to destinations obscure and obvious. You could be even more conspicuous and treat yourself to a new car – it has been one of the more innovative years for a long time. Maybe the best thing to do is to don those brand-new walking boots you were given for Christmas and stride healthily away from the excesses of the night before and into a bright New Year. Who knows, you might walk long enough to see a sunset like this.

a year in pictures

Andrew Bauman

From victims of war to high jumpers and a load of happy bull

A selection of images which capture the best from *The Independent's* photographic team **pages 12&13**

interview

John Walsh meets... Rick Stein

'I've no time for those starry chefs. We're not film or pop stars' **page 3**

arts & books

Uncle Alf and a family gathering

A fictional slice of life from the north-east by Harry Pearson **page 5**

travel

Where to go next year (and where to miss)

Month by month guide on absolutely everywhere you can go **pages 8&9**

shopping

Now for the primeval ritual of 'saleing'

... or why it is that women like to go bargain-hunting in pairs **page 15**

Games & Crossword page 2 Arts and books pages 4&5 Travel page 7 Gardening page 14 Property & cars page 16 Money page 17 Film guide page 19 Walks page 20 Events page 21

Tales of the implausible

Assess your gullibility quotient with a new quiz from William Hartston, based on some of the sillier news items of the past year

The most splendidly bizarre of the new Christmas games this year has been True or False from Hasbro. Players move their counters around a Ludo-like board according to whether they can correctly identify a series of implausible-sounding statements as true or false. Here are some samples:

a) Our forefathers immersed yarn in a bath of urine to dye it blue. The process worked best if the urine-donor had drunk alcohol.

b) Rembrandt used a drunken old beggar from Amsterdam as the model for his painting *The Wise King Solomon*.

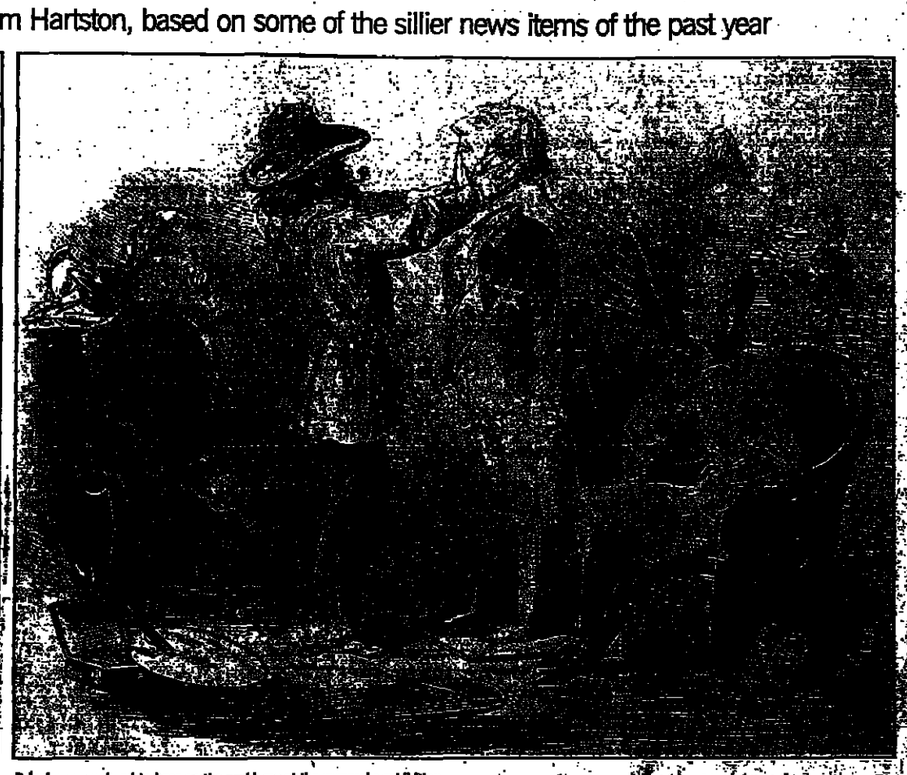
c) In 1993, a 73-year-old deaf and lame pensioner set a new record as the oldest bank robber in Denmark.

d) In a Charlie Chaplin lookalike competition, Charlie Chaplain once came third.

You'll find the answers at the end.

Now, in the spirit of True or False, we'd like to offer you a little news review of the year. Here are 10 supposed news items of 1996 of which five are genuine and five complete fabrications. If you think you can identify which are which, just send the numbers of the five genuine items to "True or False Competition" at the address given in the corner of the page. We have three copies of True or False to give to contestants who identify all five correctly – or failing that to those with the most correct answers.

An early naked cormorant-catchers' festival in Osaka



Bringing a new head to bear on the problems at the waxworks exhibition

1) When Madame Tussaud's Waxwork Exhibition opened for the first time in Melbourne, Australia, this year, an error was made in reassembling the exhibit which had been shipped from Britain in pieces. As a result the Duchess of York appeared with the head of the Princess of Wales and vice versa. The error was noticed only minutes before the celebrity opening of the exhibition.

2) A Frenchman, identified only as Jean-Marie C, was so annoyed at a bill for the tax due on his gambling winnings that he hired a convoy of armoured vans to deliver 920 sacks containing 3,730,606 one-franc coins to the tax collector. "My gesture is symbolic," he said. "The franc is the monetary unit of France."

3) A couple found guilty of engaging in a sexual act during a baseball game in Los Angeles at the Dodger Stadium were ordered to buy 50 tickets for games this season and donate them to charity. They were also placed on two years' probation and ordered to attend Aids education classes.

4) The first Christian Nudist Conference, held at Whispering Pines Resort, began with Carol Love, the owner of the resort, reciting the following poem:

Here we are sitting together in the rude.
Some folks in society would exclaim to us, how rude!
But we know we're all good people, we came to praise the Lord.
So let's all shout to Jesus and clap our hands of one accord.

5) At the National Funeral Directors' Convention in Cincinnati a set of necklace designs called the Heirloom Pendant Collection was launched. The pendants in gold, white gold and diamonds, are called Teardrop, Infinity and Love and are designed to have a small amount of ashes or lock of hair from the departed sealed inside them. "The trend in personalising the death experience is something we've seen grow over the last 10 years," said Terry Dieterle, an undertaker from Aurora who created the necklaces.

6) The city of Osaka in Japan held a Festival of Cormorant Trapping Congress, reviving a tradition last celebrated in the first half of the 19th century. Unclothed participants were required to demonstrate novel ways of catching cormorants with points being awarded for ingenuity as well as the number caught.

7) After Ron Knivett won the conker contest at the Lamb and Flag pub near Worcester, he was stripped of the title by the judge, who happened to be his brother Martin, after allegations that he had bolstered his conkers with cardboard. Ron said that he had only put cardboard in because the hole he had drilled in the conker was too large. Martin said: "There were accusations made after the event and following an investigation I ruled that Ron had indeed been using illegal substances."

8) Psychologists at the University of Chicago have shown that the pitch of a swan's honk may be affected by sounds played to the egg in the month before it hatches. Within a certain range of musical notes, encompassing about an octave, an unborn swan can be "programmed" to honk at any specified pitch. "We haven't yet got a choir of swans singing Yankee Doodle," said Dr Larry Steinberg, "but you might say that we now have the technology to do so if we wanted."

9) According to measurements taken in October, the Leaning Tower of Pisa has moved half a degree back towards the vertical in the past year. City surveyors say it is a question of "differential subsidence", and does not mean the structure is any less unsafe than it was.

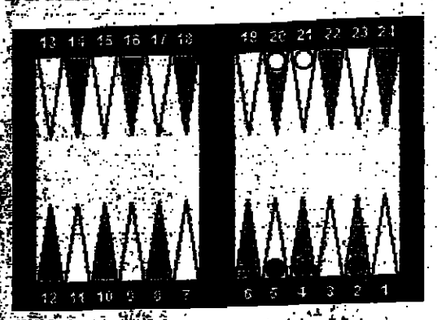
10) Following an injunction taken out in a court in Colombo, recordings of the Spice Girls may not be played or sold in Sri Lanka unless the group changes its name. The injunction was obtained by a workers' co-operative called Spice Girls, that exports herbs and spices. The judge ruled that while there was little chance of the products of the two groups being confused, it was "not correct" for the singers to "profit from the sound reputation" of the spice firm.

Answers to the True or False items: b) is false; the other three items are all true.

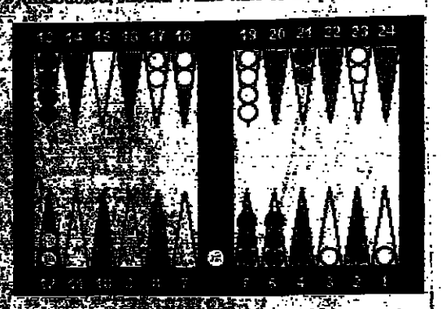
Backgammon Chris Bray

Ready to relax over the festive season? I trust that you will still find time to enter our Christmas quiz. First prize is a copy of *Advanced Backgammon*, kindly donated by twice world champion Bill Robertie, and second prize is a copy of *The Backgammon Handbook* by Heyken and Fischer. All you have to do is answer the following three questions. Entries should be marked "Backgammon Competition" and sent to the address given below.

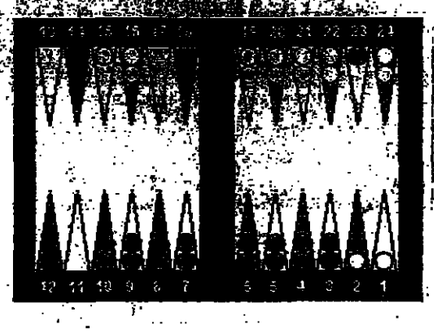
1) Black on roll – a) Should Black double? b) If doubled, should White take or drop?



2) Black on roll – a) Should Black double? b) If doubled, should White take or drop?



3) Black to play 6-5.



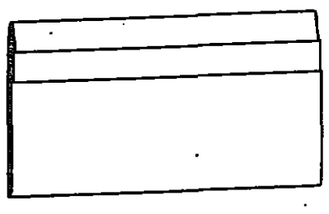
a) 7/1(2)*
b) 14/5, 10/7
c) 5/2(2)*, 4/1(2)*
d) 14/2*

Don't junk it ... use it! Things you'd probably be better off not doing with the detritus of Christmas

Christmas cards: Cut out the pretty bits to make tags for gifts. (Ideally, you should have done this as soon as they arrived to save on storage space.) Or cut out the pictures to make an Advent calendar.

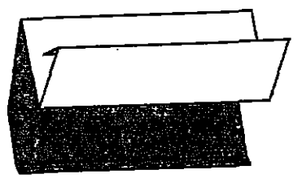
Tissue paper: Dampen and twist into decorative string to wrap parcels. (Don't wet them too much, or your string will dissolve.)

Wrapping paper: Cut into strips and weave together to make drinks coasters or placemats. Or – if you can find an untorn piece about A4 size – you can make a wallet like this:

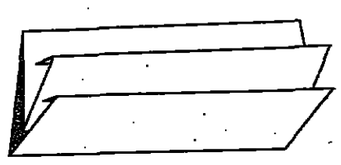


1. Fold paper top to bottom, leaving the crease at the top. Fold up a narrow hem at the bottom edge.

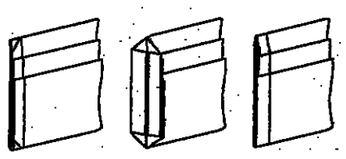
2. Fold hem edge to within approximately one or two centimetres of the top of the original fold.



3. Make a similar hem on the lower sheet and fold this up to within about a centimetre of the previous fold. You have now formed the two pouches of your wallet, which should look like the next diagram.



4. Now for the tricky part. Fold and unfold the right and left edges and corners as shown, then tuck the edge inside along the fold marks. Fold down centre to complete the wallet. Present to anyone who was unfortunate enough not to be given a real leather wallet for Christmas. Just in time to start saving money for next Christmas.



The tree: Strip off needles, saw off branches leaving just a few at different levels a few inches long. Use as hat, coat or shoe stand, thus liberating last week's coathangers. Alternatively, just throw it all away. One can take this recycling business too far, you know.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

Whatever happened to ... Nineteen ninety-six?

The year: A leap year as Uranus moved into Aquarius.

The consequences: At the beginning of 1996, astrologers said that the planetary shift would make people more idealistic, but NatWest charged its mortgage borrowers an extra day's interest for 29 February.

Political predictions: Jonathan Cainer in the *Daily Mail* predicted an election victory for Tony Blair before the end of 1996. Major will not last until the end of the year. Russell Grant agreed about Blair for PM, but not perhaps until early in 1997. His moon is in Aquarius, you see. Bhavna Pota, a Hindu astrologer, predicted changes in the leadership of the U.K. United States and India, and a bad time for John Major between March 1996 and March 1997. Shelley von Strunckel said that Bill Clinton would be opposed by a political unknown. *Old Moore's Almanac* said that the peace process in Northern Ireland would be secured beyond doubt.

What happened: Tony Blair's moon is still in Aquarius. John Major had a troubled year, but is still with us.

Royal predictions: Nicholas Campion, the president of the Astrological Association, said that Princess Diana may have a series of short-term relationships if the right man does not come along. Shelley von Strunckel said that Charles and Diana would not divorce. Bhavna Pota said that Charles's second wife would be about five years younger than himself. *Old Moore* said that the Queen would capitulate over "a particularly contentious issue" in the autumn.

Point of information: Charles is a year younger than Camilla Parker Bowles.

Romantic predictions: Bhavna Pota said that Jemima and Imran would have a son in 1996. Justin Toper (*The Sun*) thought they would have a baby, or adopt one. He also foresaw marriage between Hugh Grant and Liz Hurley.

Economics: John Rentoul wrote: "The British economy will trot along in 1996, forcing its rider, Kenneth Clarke, to cut interest rates to 6 per cent by mid-year and maybe as low as 5.75 per cent by the end of the year."

Current interest rates: 6 per cent, just up from 5.75.

Conclusion: Sound economics are better than crystal balls.

Chess William Hartston

It's Black to play and mate in one – easy! But how many moves did it take to get to the diagram position? If you can work out the shortest route, you may win a prize in our New Year's competition.

What did you get for Christmas? If it was a copy of the Chessmaster 5000 CD-Rom, you must be feeling pleased with yourself. While its playing program is not quite as strong as those of its rivals Fritz and Genius, the Chessmaster 5000 (from Mindscape) has a host of attractive additional features the others cannot match. Quite apart from a choice of playing levels and time-controls, you can play on a variety of elegantly designed chess sets and be entertained by music of your choice while you play.

I lost several games to it before learning that the only thing to do if you want to have a chance of winning is to select a straight two-dimensional, Staunton-pattern graphic, turn off the music and concentrate hard.

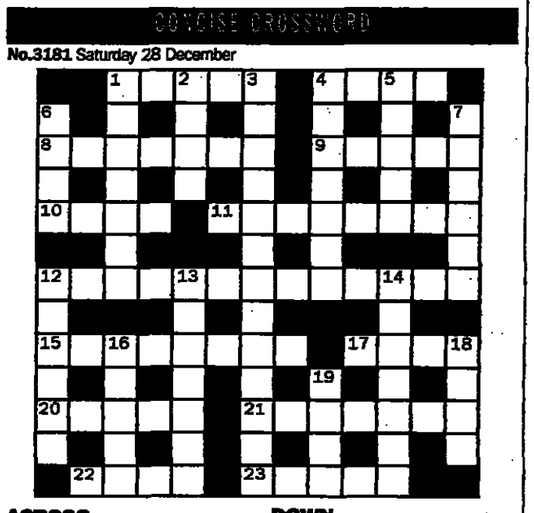
The lower levels of play are especially well-designed for the beginner. Unlike many computer chess programs, this one has an in-built tendency to be aggressive rather than materialistic. So it will sacrifice pieces just to expose the enemy king – which is just the sort of opponent you need in order to learn proper defensive technique.

If you didn't get Chessmaster 5000 for Christmas, but you do have Windows 95 and a CD-Rom drive on your computer, then all is not yet lost, because you have a chance to win one in our competition. All you have to do is work out how the position in the above diagram was reached. We can tell you that White has just made his 19th move. Can you reconstruct the moves that led here? (Legality is the sole criterion.)

Three copies of Chessmaster 5000 will be awarded to senders of the first correct answers we open after the closing date. Entries to: Chess Competition, at the address given at the bottom right.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3181 Saturday 28 December



ACROSS

1 Hag (5)
4 Watery part of milk (4)
8 Mythical beast (7)
9 Bird of prey (5)
10 Record (4)
11 Outbreak of emotionalism (8)
12 Palmist, e.g. (7-6)
15 Irritating (8)
17 Precious stone (4)
20 Zodiac sign (5)
21 Washing (7)
22 Apartment (4)
23 Musical symbols (5)

DOWN

1 Plaintive cry (7)
2 Implement (4)
3 Fruit (8,5)
4 Struggle (7)
5 Swiss mountain (5)
6 Animal fat (4)
7 Mend (6)
12 Pointless (6)
13 Person newly risen to position of power (7)
14 Place of pilgrimage (7)
16 Revolting individual? (5)
18 Child's toy (2-2)
19 Leave (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Marrying, 5 Bard (Marienbad), 9 Umber, 10 Typhoon, 11 Hailstones, 14 Undercarriage, 16 Editorials, 20 Chateau, 21 Usher, 22 Dame, 23 Etchings. DOWN: 1 Mouthful, 2 Rebuilds, 3 Yarns, 4 National Trust, 6 Anon, 7 Dope, 8 Appear, 12 Marathon, 13 Censures, 15 Rudder, 17 Rough, 18 Acid, 19 Calm.

Bridge Competition Alan Hiron

In each of the first three questions, a normal Two Club system is assumed and it is a high standard rubber bridge game. In the first two you are given five possible solutions and asked to mark them out of 10.

1) South holds at love all:

♠A K Q 6
♡9 7 6 5 4 3 2
♢4
♣K

West	North	East	South
	1D	pass	1H
pass	1S	pass	?

How do you rate bids of Three Spades, Four Spades, Two Clubs, Three Clubs and Four Clubs?

2) With East-West vulnerable, South holds:

♠none
♡J 10 7 4
♢Q J 10 8
♣K Q 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
	2D	4S	?

(North's Two Diamonds is a Multi – either a Weak Two in a major or a strong three-suited hand.) How do you rate bids of Five Hearts, Six hearts, Seven Hearts, Five Spades and Four No-trumps?

3) As South, dealer at love-all, you hold:

♠A (Y) 8 6 4
♡A J 8 5 3
♢7 4
♣2

Your fifth spade (Y) is unspecified. What is the *lowest* value for this card to enable you to open the bidding?

4) As South, with East-West vulnerable, you hold:

♠K Q 3 2
♡J 9 7
♢Q 4
♣10 9 7 3

West	North	East	South
		1S	pass
pass	dble	2H	pass
2S	dble	all pass	

Having decided to pass your partner's second take-out double for penalties, what do you lead? What about S2, DQ, C10, C3 or something else?

5)

West	East
♠K J 9	♠10 7
♡A J 4	♡K 8 3
♢Q 8 4	♢A K J 10 3
♣A J 10 2	♣K Q 6

As West, you open 1NT (15-17 points) and are raised directly to 6NT. North leads C9; how should you play? (Please limit your answer to question 5 to not more than 60 words!)

Send your answers to: Bridge Competition, at the address given below. Senders of the best sets of solutions will receive book prizes from Chess & Bridge Ltd. The winners will be announced, and the problems discussed next month.

Entries to all competitions should be sent to: (Competition name), *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, to arrive on or before 11 January 1997. Normal competition rules apply.

TURN TO PAGE 25... for the weather, sky at night, Jasper Rees on TV, Robert Hanks on radio and Kerber's new cartoon strip

Small pond, big fish

PHOTO: ADRIAN DENNIS

John Walsh meets...Rick Stein

'It's all to do with the public's increased enthusiasm for food. I feel part of a sociological change in this country'

Some miles removed from the west London studios where they broadcast *Rick Stein's Fruits of the Sea*, a good four hours on the Waterloo-Bodmin line, lies the tiny Cornish village of Padstow. Like Mousehole, the village it most resembles, its harbour is a near-perfect ring, into which small fishing boats and battered trawlers come gracefully home, after the malevolent swell of the Atlantic. Like other Cornish fishing (and smuggling) communities, Padstow has a nice line in tragic folklore, mainly centred on the "Doom Bar", the nasty-looking sandbank that lies like a recumbent bouncer across the mouth of the estuary, as if warning ships not to come near. Hundreds of boats have been beached, wrecked and capsized on the Doom Bar, most recently in 1994, when two bass fishermen got too close and were tipped over by the waves. The other thing you need to know is that Padstow's name is a corruption of "Petroc's Stowe" – St Petroc being a Welsh divine who founded a monastery in Padstow and thus made it the religious capital of Cornwall in the trend-hungry years of the 6th century AD.

Today, Padstow's most famous inhabitant is a huge fan of St Petroc, having gone to the extent of naming his fashionable hotel 'n' bistro after the loveable saint who could number dragons among his friends. But unlike the local fisherman, he needn't worry about running aground on anything worse than the sandbank of popular taste. Rick Stein is a chef and restaurateur who has capitalised on the idea of "keeping faith" with the local, the regional, the quaintly backyard. Stressing his closeness to the fishing community and his empathy with the sea, its "moods", its "taste", its "fruits", he has become the most famous fish chef in the country, through the BBC series *Rick Stein's Taste of the Sea* and the book that accompanied it. He is about to begin a second series of ichthycentric musings in January, this time entitled *Rick Stein's Fruits of the Sea*.

He comes bustling into the Seafood Restaurant, his premier league caterie, plonks himself down beside you in the conservatory and asks, "Are you happy with such a small wine glass?" When you point out it's actually sherry in a, you know, sherry glass, he laughs delightedly. He is large, solid-looking guy with exiguous hair, a frank and open face, a startlingly blue shirt and wildly mobile eyebrows. The fingers of his right hand are offputtingly stained with red dye, like the grooms in an am-dram *Macbeth*. Blood? Cochineal? "No, it's pecan nuts, actually. I've been nibbling them in the car."

Mr Stein has driven down from Birmingham, where he has been attending the BBC's autumnal *Good Food Show*. "It's fascinating to watch them all, the starry chefs [he will not specify but it's clear he is talking about Gary Rhodes and Anthony Worrall-Thompson] striking attitudes. I mean, they're only chefs. It's not like they're film stars or pop stars. It's that old cultural thing, I'm afraid. Being interested in food is just not the same as being interested in reading books..."

Did his programme have an attitude, beyond displaying his enthusiasm (and his restaurant)? "Yes. I'm keen to educate British taste about fish," he says.

"There's more to it than making cash out of writing the book and going on the telly. I feel embarrassed there's so much fish around the British Isles and we're just not making the best of it. It's a job of re-education for Tesco's as much as for restaurateurs – I can come up with a new recipe for some obscure fish, and they'll remind me that the three most popular fish in the British Isles are still cod, haddock and plaice..."

Stein is not a native Padstovian, but he is something of a local treasure, in a small village with no industry, manufacture or conspicuous local endeavour beyond fishing and souvenir shops. Not everyone, of course, finds him wholeheartedly adorable. Listen to the chat of locals and you'll hear stories of his short temper, the high turnover of kitchen staff at his restaurant, the hordes of imbecile London foodies he attracts to the town, the prices in his delicatessen... One way that local feeling manifests itself is in the rumour I heard on three occasions, that Stein is on the point of opening a fish 'n' chip shop in the town. Whether this is local snobbery (my dear, are we going to turn into Hastings?) or a local plea for a restaurant the poorer classes can afford, it's hard to say. "I keep picking up this rumour," Stein says, "but it's just not true. I've got a bistro up at St Petroc's (that is, his hotel) but that's about it."

Between restaurant, bistro and deli, he employs about 80 people. Although he admits, "I've certainly lost staff through going off the deep end and ranting at them; but it does rather wind me up when someone does something wrong six times in succession and then does it again...", he is more a fond paternalist than a tyrant. Every summer, for instance, he invites all his employees and their families to a massive beach barbecue. "We put a gas burner on the beach and have this massive cookout for 200 people. This summer we did lobster, crab, prawns, monkfish, all of it in Thai red curry paste. Had a bit of a problem with gatecrashers, of course, because you can't really fence off a beach and say, 'Look, eff off, this isn't your party'." A nearby pub decided to stay open as long as the revellers wanted. By all accounts, quite a shindig.

The clambake appears on film in the new TV series, which also features a hidden camera across the road from Stein's Seafood Restaurant, recording the reactions of passers-by. "Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish, fish, oysters, fish," says one chap dismissively to his date, as they scrutinise the menu. "It's all fish here." Watching Stein on television, you're struck by what a natural performer he is to the camera. His knobbly features and burly frame are always moving, always dancing away like a boxer in front of a scalding wok or fish kettle, tossing a massive two-hundredweight Le Creuset frypan full of Valencian paella. How different, you think, from the bibulous posturing of Keith Floyd; Stein as the coal-face worker rather than the Café Royal dandy.

His most relaxed presentational mode is, as it were, face to face across a table, as if he'd just finished an irritatingly rushed luncheon and was simply shooting the breeze with the viewer before disappearing into the kitchen.

There's something slightly forced about these moments (complete with charming fluffs and digressions), but you inevitably warm to him. The TV show, with its moody shots of Cornish cliffs, and its indulgent tour-documentary of Padstow's local customs, is a calculated display of regional integrity and community fun, as fictional in its way as *The Darling Buds of May*.

Something else you get, rather unexpectedly, is poetry. Footage of soaring gulls is accompanied by Blakes' *Auguries of Innocence* ("To see a World in a grain of sand..."). Chatting about the timelessness of eating rituals, he misquotes Hardy's "In the Time of the Breaking of Nations" ("Yet this will go onward the same/ Though Dynasties pass"). Allusions to Shakespearean songs ("But as you grow to man's estate...") spring naturally to his lips. "Well I am an English graduate," Stein reminds you (he studied Eng Lit at New College, Oxford, under Christopher Tolkien, the Old English specialist and son of the hobbit fancier), "and it's nice to drop some poetry into the series when there's an opportunity. Once we were trying to link a cooking shot with a lovely shot of the estuary at dawn. Between all the Thai green curry and the stir-fried scallops, we were a bit stumped. I thought maybe a bit of Shakespeare about the sun rising over the sea. But then I thought, what we need is contrast, something about where the ideas for recipes come from. If you're living in a grey city, for instance..." And that is why the dawn-estuary shot is accompanied by someone intoning TS Eliot's *The Waste Land*: "Under the brown fog of a winter dawn/ A crowd flowed over London Bridge...".

Stein grew up in a village called Churchill near Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire. His father was a director of the Distillers company and co-owned a lobster boat. "Both my parents were keen cooks," he remembers, "but my father was particularly good at soups and shellfish. We had a house in Padstow since I was born, and we used to have holidays here all the time." At Oxford, in between *Beowulf* and editing the student magazine *Cherwell*, he ran mobile discos for common room parties. Later, he worked as a "greaser" in the engine room of a ship, and spent some time roustabouting in Australia. His big break came when his Uncle Otto in Dusseldorf left him a cool £10,000 and, in partnership with a meat buyer at Smithfield, he set up a discotheque on the Padstow harbour front.

"Unfortunately it was impossible to keep order. There used to be terrible fights. All the fishermen would come in at 5.30 and get terribly pissed. And, since there was nowhere else in Padstow with a late licence, they'd stay there. We had some spectacular barneys." So Stein and his partner re-thought the place as a restaurant, which it remains to this day. "In those days," he recalls, "people's expectations of eating out were very low. We kept it simple, mainly because I hadn't learnt to cook anything fancy. We'd do prawn cocktail, prawns with avocado..." But gradually things started shifting up several gears.

"It's all to do with the public's increased enthusiasm for food. I feel part of a sociological change in this country, although I don't necessarily ascribe the change to myself..." To a remarkable degree, Stein relies on the enthusiasm of his diners and friends, who suggest dishes and criticise his more outlandish creations. "What I like," he says, "is people coming in and encouraging us to be better."

The main innovations for which he is responsible are twofold. First, he doesn't like recipes where the fish disintegrates in the stew. "We went to Marseilles during the filming and had a bouillabaisse. I got a little pissed off because they turn it into such a performance, such a commitment. You have to sit down and endure this ritual, when the only point of the dish is to use up any fish that weren't sold in the market by the end of day. I don't like all that fierce boiling. We do it separately, make a nice *couillon* with lots of flavourings like a salt cod, and add it to the fish at the end..." Since it was what I was then eating opposite the maelstrom at the moment he was describing it, I couldn't disagree. It was gorgeous. Never again, you tell yourself, will I watch haddock disintegrating in my frying pan in three inches of boiling Sauvignon...

Stein's second innovation is to bring exotic and unusual flavours, spices and sauces to traditional fish cooking. A nation that has historically thought the only allowable complements to fish are salt, vinegar, hollandaise or tomato ketchup has been woken up by people like Stein, whose influential first book, *English Seafood Cookery* (Penguin, 1989), won the Glenfiddich Food Book of the year. Show him some smoked haddock and he'll instantly surround it with curried potatoes and poached eggs. Give him a handful of prawns and he'll assault them with chilli marinade and tandoori spices. He is a perfect fiend for kaffir lime leaves. He has a bit of a thing about coriander, turmeric and the Thai fish sauce called *mam pla*. Should he wish to impress a friend, he'll serve a sea bass with a vinaigrette flavoured with dry vermouth and vanilla...

"The most inventive places for fish cooking at the moment are Australia and California," he says firmly. "They have a refreshingly guiltless attitude to borrowing ideas from all over the place. The French, on the other hand, are very proud of their traditional fish cuisine and very suspicious of people who throw garlic and chilli and coriander about. They think people like me are magpie-ing." Given his interest in borrowing from other cultures, it seemed odd that he didn't try more home-grown delights – like star-gazy pie, that historic staple of south coast cuisine. "It doesn't really work, star-gazy pie. You can't have an oily fish – pilchards – in a creamy pie. It just doesn't work for me. I don't find it very imaginative." So there.

He is typically self-deprecating about being a celebrity. "Yeah, it's all right. But I'm only a minor celebrity. It means that, while the series and the repeats are on, people want to come up and shake your hand. It took some getting used to. During the last series, I was walking down Shepherd's Bush, carrying the *Evening Standard*, and this bloke came up and started saying something about television. I thought he wanted to know what time something was on, so I opened the paper at the listings. Then I realised he was just saying, 'Saw you on the telly'..."

When not cooking, or travelling, or filming, he surfs and swims with his ubiquitous Jack Russell Chalky, and does exhibition events in front of business executives or aspirant foodies, with his trusty two-burner stove. Like Delia Smith (but without the prima donna side), he likes doing stage demonstrations, about which he tells funny stories of things going wrong – such as turning the cooker off again and again because he couldn't see if the gas was on or not. "But I've spoken to my brother, who's an eminent neuropsychologist, and he assures me the mind goes blank in the same way when you're preparing for a medical demonstration..."

What, I wondered, did he (or his brother) make of the death of Terence Donovan? The Sixties photographer had apparently killed himself because he'd come to see the art to which he'd given his life as repetitious series of attempts to do things which a hundred young pretenders could now do just as well. Did Rick Stein ever get fed up cooking fish for people? "Mmm – well. Terence Donovan was an artist. There was nothing else than his art. What I've got is a kitchen full of chefs of different ability, raw materials of different quality, customers of different grades of niceness, staff with different shortcomings, from having nervous breakdowns to nicking things out of the till, plus all the TV and stuff. Cooking, and running a restaurant, it's not about art. It's more like having lots of children, and knowing you can't ever stop worrying about any of them..."

'Fruits of the Sea' begins 8 Jan, BBC2; the book of the series is published by BBC Books 9 Jan, £17.99

David Lister
arts notebook

One of the undoubted highlights of next year will be the official opening of Shakespeare's Globe. There are problems still to be overcome, not least the carefully unpublicised one about the noise from the redevelopment of the neighbouring Bankside power station into the Tate's national museum of modern art. There's also the semantic difficulty that the Globe certainly gave the appearance of opening this year, but that was apparently merely a prologue season on a temporary stage. Next summer sees the real, fully thatched McCoy, when Mark Rylance, the Globe's artistic director, opens in (and as) *Henry V*.

When I met Rylance I wondered if there might not be a problem with the ribaldry and heckling from the courtyard spectators that was such a joy in the prologue season for the comedy *Two Gentlemen of Verona* but may sit less comfortably with a tragedy or even a history play. Rylance told me he loved it when audiences became so involved with *Two Gentlemen of Verona* as to shout "Don't Do It Julia" when the heroine was considering taking back her errant lover.

But could he really stomach "Don't do it Harry" from the audience just as he was about to spill blood at Agincourt? Rylance was impressively unfazed. "It's not necessarily helpful," he acknowledged, "but you learn to cope. Once in Wolverhampton in the final act of *Hamlet* a kid shouted 'Look out Hamlet'. It put Laertes off his guard and I scored a hit."

Any hopes of showing solidarity with Trevor Nunn and keeping the word luvvie out of this column have been dashed by Glenn Close's diary of the making of *101 Dalmatians* in the film magazine *Premiere*. Reading it, one is seized by an urge to scream it.

The actress, it seems, is eager to banish the demon of Cruella De Vil from her soul. Her last diary entry is particularly poignant. "I realise how ready I am to let Cruella go," she writes. "Cruella is evil and outrageous, nothing to do with sensitivity or heart. Like a shark, she sees something move and she strikes. I'm glad I did it, but fun as it was, I will not mourn her passing."

It must have been traumatic indeed playing a dog-napping cartoon character. Heaven help Glenn Close's sensitivity if she tackles Lady Macbeth.

One of the minor seasonal diversions is to await the Christmas card from the Department of National Heritage and then relate the picture on the front to recent news events in the arts. Most secretaries of state will insist on the most anodyne artwork possible or something deeply abstract rather than anything that can be related to cuts, broken promises or shady dealings. But still basking in her achievement in keeping the Treasury to a standstill grant for the arts rather than the threatened 3 per cent cut, Virginia Bottomley is serene. Her card arrives portraying Edward Burne-Jones's *The Angel*. Now that's what I call confidence.

More artistic angst with Damien Hurts on page 23

arts & books

Not £200. Not £100. To you, love, 75p. Philip Sweeney finds gems in a car boot

Saturday afternoon sale – where the naff and the cast-off are in the vanguard of desirability

Graphic: Julian Saul

I had that Thinker in the back of my cab once

It was retro cuisine, the alleged vogue for Sixties dishes such as Black Forest gateau and chicken Kiev – as reported by the new tits 'n' brioche monthly *Eat Soup* – that finally convinced me. There is now no field of human consumption in which the naff and cast-off are not in the vanguard of desirability; the car boot sale is henceforth unopposed as the chic-est, best-value, ineluctably most sensible retail institution of the beginning of the third millennium. And still, unlike most so-called flea markets, cheap.

"Personally, I think no-fashion is the most sophisticated look of all," observed Christian Lacroix in a recent interview, putting his finger flatteringly on one's very own "look", before going on to reveal that the décor of his house in the rue des Beaux Arts had been acquired at flea markets in Paris, Camden and Bermondsey at a cost of not more than £200 to £300 an item! (My exclamation mark.) Good God, Chris, I thought, they must have seen you coming, mincing round Bermondsey in impeccably clashing jacket and tie, brandishing your platinum Crédit Lyonnais charge card. For £200 at a car boot sale, you could buy an entire life, with any two of the traders who took your fancy thrown in for the extra pony.

The ascendancy of the car boot sale aesthetic first became apparent in the field of music, as the Easy Listening phenomenon took hold last year. Where else do you get those witty Les Baxter and Herb Alpert LPs, and the Tretyakoff prints and Babycham glasses to go with them? Within weeks of taking up Easy Listening, I had acquired, for 75p, a 12-album *Reader's Digest* set, boxed in slate-blue Nagahide with gold tooling and certified excellent by David Jacobs, entitled *Mood Music for Listening and Relaxation*, covering, album by album, all the key sub-genres: Moonlight Piano, Hits from Broadway, Vienna Bonbons, Candlelight and Wine ... From then on, the classics dropped into my grasp like ripe Black Forest gateaux – items such as *Hammond A Gogo, Vols I and II*, "famous evergreens and latest hits presented in true A-gogo style by James Last and his Hammond-Bar-Combo", on the cover of which the hyphenated maestro leers teutonically from behind a large candlestick at a permed model, as she sips a-gogo style from an antique silver Bavarian mulled wine cup. Soon I became frankly élitist – for so-called Easy Listening, some of this stuff is practically bloody Shostakovich – and began to reject anything but the truly moronic: *Settle Down with Roger Whittaker, Funky Junction Play a Tribute to Deep Purple* and the magisterially facile *Let Phil Tate Play for Your Dance Party*.

Then it became apparent that not just Easy Listening, but all aspects of musical life were to be found at the car boot sale *disquaire*. I set myself a simple task: for the price of one new CD – £14.99, say – to buy an entirely representative modern music collection and the means to play it. The work of two hours, it turned out. First, an immaculate 1968 Dansette Viva in cream and maroon (long MoT, almost new stylus) for a fiver. Then the library: early opera (a 1958 version of *White Horse Inn* featuring Rita Williams, the Rita Williams singers and the Tony Osborne Orchestra), the Bristol Sound (*Time to Play* by Russ Conway), jungle (*A Swingin' Safari* by Bert Kaemphert), drum 'n' bass (ditto with the Dansette's treble and bass dials both up to full whack), world music (*Vacaciones en Benidorm* by Anon), queercore (*Gai Gai les Bretons* by the Robert Trabucco Musette Ensemble), Celtic New Age (*Gai Gai les Bretons* with the Dansette at 16 rpm).

With £1.50 still left, I indulged myself in two outstanding specimens of organ arcana: *Ena Baga's Hammond Holiday* by Reginald Dixon's replacement at the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, a lady adept at Swing, Latin, ballads and/or legitimate techniques; and *The Cordovox Magic of Valentino*, a sort of bargain-basement Irish Liberace with a purple ruffled shirt, 27,000 fans (Irish, presumably), baby seal and a £2,000 stereophonic Cordovox capable of reproducing any sound from a Hawaiian guitar to a jet plane.

So successful was my record experiment, I began to apply the same principle to other areas, with equally spectacular results. In absolutely any field of human endeavour, you can replicate *dernier cri* fashion, in the space of half a morning and for a fraction of the cost. Clothing is easy, as 90 per cent of today's fashion headlines deal in reworkings of early Seventies this or late Fifties that or mid-period Biba the other. I settled more or less at random on the English Eccentrics photospread unveiled in the *Independent on Sunday* last March and rapidly put together a version of the Rifat Ozbek yellow minidress, thigh boots and gloves – couture that cost a couple of grand, presumably – from the crowded racks of Ego, Dorothy, Tammy Girl or Yessica labels at an "Any Three Items for £1" stall. The matching yellow wig took a little longer, and cost a cool two quid, but I found it eventually, labelled "Fun Wig: Adult Carnival Accessory. Made in China", on a novelty stall, along with Taiwanese pantyhose, joke condoms and sticky trolls. Vivienne Westwood's English Eccentrics coat was a cinch, too, and, as for the Katharine Hamnett Sixties leather jacket, sequined bikini and tartan tights outfit, the whole thinking was so uncannily in tune with the contents of the novelty stall, I could have sworn the stallholder actually was Katharine Hamnett, kitted out with fake beer gut, raddled make-up and T-reg Sierra, for some sort of stylish weekend prank. Furniture and interiors are almost as easy as clothes. Seventies-style shag-pile rugs and G-Plan furniture are in, says issue number one of *Wallpaper* magazine. Nothing more to add, really, except perhaps to draw attention to the investment potential of china carthorses in little plastic harnesses pulling barrels of sherry or sets of fetching satin-effect metal coasters. And to note the wide scope for individual creativity. "There's something fantastically sinister about toys," remarks the video director, Zanna, as she shows the contents of her converted schoolhouse studio – all distressed walls, lurid fabrics and groups of disfigured dolls – to this month's *Elle Decoration*. Absolutely right, especially when deployed in juxtaposition with other curious objects like the wacky and collectable Ingram's Perfex bakelite enema set I spotted for £1.50 recently, or an enigmatic and disturbing row of charred Yorkshire pudding tins.

Talking of which, what, finally, about car boot cuisine? For retro recipes, no problem. Try the following from the *Farepak Book of Parties and Entertaining*, authored by one Myra Street in 1968: bacon and egg pie – a virile, native and happening quiche lorraine from the Television Suppers chapter (ingredients: bacon, eggs, pastry, Worcestershire sauce). Or this original and elegant main course accompaniment from the Christmas Dinners section: fruit rings (ingredients: one can pineapple rings, one can peach halves, one can cherries; method: place cherries in pineapple rings on peach halves and heat). The ingredients can be found at knock-down prices and from different provenances, along with Finnish Panda brand Jammy Dodgers, Arabic label export Midget Gems and bags of things called Foam Mis-shapes.

On reflection, however, the dish most perfectly representative of car boot sale chic seems to me to be the pickled egg, so often to be found in close proximity to lead-effect garden gnomes and bulldogs announcing "Piss Off" or "Make My Day". With a big jar of pickled eggs on board, you can reverse confidently into the future, conjuring a merry dialectic as you go between fashion, no-fashion and junk.

The girlie who couldn't shock 'n' roll

Claire Gorham tells Janie Lawrence how she is much too serious for 'The Girlie Show'

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Claire Gorham concedes that she was probably never quite cut out to be a Girlie. She loathes night-clubs – way too noisy – and her ideal evening is a dinner party with friends with a spot of Neil Young.

What sort of shocking pastime is this for a Girlie Show presenterette? After all wasn't *shocking* the mission of the three young women on the Channel 4 late-night show? They were meant to instruct the rest of us in the ways of *outré*, eye-poppingly bad behaviour. Small wonder that while the other two original presenters have been kept on, 30-year-old Claire's place in the second series which starts on 4 January has been usurped by younger, leaner Girlie with the obligatory pierced belly button and an alleged love of sex in the rain.

"I'm not a whoopee, whey-hey sort of person," says Claire in a tone verging on the apologetic. "I'm actually quite serious." Scarcely the most helpful attribute for a show that has been touted as personifying in yer face girl power but is best summed up as the bastard child of *Loaded* and *Blue Peter*. For those of us antiquated enough to recall the word "feminism", watching Claire waxing a man's bottom, interviewing a shoplifter and proffer helpful hints with dildos was a cringing embarrassment.

Surprisingly Claire is still keen to defend the programme and some of its – let's be charitable – adolescent antics. "A lot of people really liked it. It got high viewing figures. It never set out to be *Panorama* or *The Late Show*. It's just about girls having fun. It was Friday late night TV – what were people expecting? If it had been Jonathan Ross, Roland Rivron and Mark Lamarr, nobody would have given a toss."

Such a robust defence must be inspired, at least in part, by Claire's overriding fear that any criticism now will have people rushing to label her "a bitter old trout". For the record, she is not. She has remained good friends with her former colleagues and is genuinely grateful that the show furnished her with that all important break into telly. Diplomacy aside, it's patently obvious that it was not to her taste.

"I didn't think it would be such a light entertainment programme," she offers tentatively. "I thought it would be a little more informative."

The writing was on the wall for Claire even as they were filming the first series. "About three months in, I knew I wasn't right for the show and it wasn't right for me. I put it to the producers. They said it was obvious I wasn't enjoying the work and that it came across on camera. Of course, nobody likes to be told they weren't right for something but it was a mutual sigh of relief. Friends who knew me well said that I looked embarrassed. I wasn't, but I did feel uncomfortable."

It has since been reported that there were nights after the show when Claire went home crying feeling that she had "sold her soul". This she now denies and declares only once during her tenure was she reduced to tears and this by a publicity interview for a prying glossy magazine. "Before I knew it, I was being asked all these intimate questions about my sex life – 'what did I keep in my panty drawer' and 'did I swallow'. Not only did I answer, I answered truthfully, then I did go home and cry at my own stupidity.

"On the show I just put myself into a bit of a bubble. I sat back, did it, and enjoyed it to the best of my ability. I've always been a bit rude and I'm naturally inquisitive, so I will ask my friends about their sex lives. But sometimes I'd go home and think 'I've done that on TV'."

Since *The Girlie Show* the offers have not exactly flooded in, but she is reluctant to blame that on the show. "I think it's because there are so few black people out there. But I also speak with a posh accent, so I'm not quite rootsie enough to be on a black programme."

She has returned to her previous free-lance journalism work and is hopeful of her own slot on local radio. Meantime, she is fronting a *Travelog* programme (C4, 15 January) for which she travelled to Switzerland. Offered either there or Portugal, she chose the former as it happens to be the nationality of her biological mother. Adopted and brought up by her parents in Wimbledon, she is one of nine children.

"It was interesting to visit a country that's so alien to the person you are. People would actually laugh at my clothes, because in Switzerland it's all Gucci shoes and Hermès scarves. It was the irony that somebody like me came from somewhere like there."

She has never met her Nigerian father, but she has searched out her birth mother. "Mum and Dad knew it was something I had to do. You don't like to acknowledge that something's out there that makes you incomplete, especially if you come from a family that is so loving. But it was a bit of an anti-climax. I wanted to see someone who looks like me, and my birth mother doesn't."

It is to Claire Gorham's credit that she was ultimately considered an unsuitable spokeswoman for TV's brand of girl power. And it is an indictment of what this power is meant to be. But then it is manufactured by middle-aged male TV executives.

Preface to 1997

Boyd Tonkin looks ahead to the new year's lead reads

Alan Coren once called a volume of his collected pieces *Golfing for Cats*. He reckoned that, since both key words famously appealed to bookshop buyers, combining them would double his sales potential. On that principle, a book that weds New Age mysticism to a sporting superstar ought to walk off the shelves. Davis Miller's *The Tao of Muhammad Ali* (Vintage, March) certainly wins the prize for Smartest Title of Early 1997. It joins a posse of forthcoming biographies that promise to reassess our heroes and villains. Opinions will differ on which is which, with, eg, *Michael Heseltine* (by Michael Crick; Hamish Hamilton, February); *Che Guevara* (by John Lee Anderson; Bantam, April); or even *Saint Paul* (by AN Wilson; Sinclair-Stevenson, March). Fresh looks at genuine romantic heroes include Phyllis Grosskurth's life of Byron (Hodder, Feb) and two new perspectives on JMW Turner, by Anthony Bailey (Sinclair-Stevenson, May) and James Hamilton (Hodder, June).

It also looks like a strong spring for creative mavericks. Charles Nicholl follows Rimbaud into Africa (Cape, May); David Hadju goes in search of Billy Strayhorn, the genius behind Duke Ellington (Granta, March) while Tom Hiney revisits Raymond Chandler's mean streets (Chatto, June) and Victor Bockris catches up with post-punk priestess Patti Smith (Fourth Estate, June).

Elsewhere, the British retreat from Hong Kong and the 50th anniversary of Indian freedom prompt a battalion of post-imperial reappraisals. Hong Kong lends a setting to Paul Theroux's new novel (*Kowloon Tong*; Hamish Hamilton, May), while Tim Heald reports on its dying colonial days (*Beating Retreat*; Sinclair-Stevenson, May). Indian excursions include new lives of Gandhi by Yogesh Chadha (Century, March) and Nehru by Nigel Hamilton (Century, April). Sunil Khilnani analyses *The Idea of India* (Hamish Hamilton, June) and Patrick French traces the road to partition (*Liberty or Death*: HarperCollins, June). For more flippant sidelights on empire, join Harry Ritchie's tour around *The Last Pink Bits* (Hodder, May); or, for a bold account of why imperial powers succeed at all, Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel* (Cape, April).

Back home, election year sees some original takes on a fast-changing society. Stephen Pollard and Andrew Adonis explore Britain's social divisions in *A Class Act* (Hamish Hamilton, June), while Vernon Bogdanor investigates *Power and the People* (Gollancz, April). Blake Morrison considers our family troubles in *As If* (Granta, March); and Michael Bracewell evokes "pop life in Albion" (*England is Mine*; HarperCollins, March). Blairite guru Geoff Mulgan offers his big picture in *Connexity* (Chatto, Feb) as Charles Handy reconciles work with life in *The Hungry Spirit* (Hutchinson, May). Standing out among many titles that look into cyberspace are Sadie Plant's *Zeroes and Ones* (Fourth Estate, March) and John Seabrook's *Deeper* (Faber, March). The hi-tech global market takes a hammering from John Gray (*False Dawn: the Delusions of Global Capitalism*; Granta, June) and former bishop David Jenkins (*Can we Think Again?*; Sinclair-Stevenson, May). Still on the radical side, new-wave feminism can boast Joan Smith's *Different for Girls* (Chatto, June) and Margaret Anne Doody's epic of revisionist LitCrit, *The True Story of the Novel* (HarperCollins, Jan).

Among the spring crop of fiction, expect great things from Jonathan Coe's *The House of Sleep* (Viking, May) and Edmund White's *The Farewell Symphony* (Chatto, May). Controversy will reliably break out around Jeanette Winterson's *Gut Symmetries* (Granta, Jan); Martin Amis's stories in *Straight Fiction* (Flamingo, May) and Will Self's *Great Apes* (Bloomsbury, April). Among novelists from beyond these shores, Saul Bellow returns with *The Actual* (Viking, June), Pasolini's rediscovered *Petrolio* will fuel debate (Secker, May); and Arundhati Roy looks set to become India's Next Big Thing with *The God of Small Things* (Flamingo, June). Finally, you may recall that Gilbert Adair revealed here that he had given up on novels in despair. Well, I'm pleased to announce that – in a fit of absent-mindedness – he appears to have written one: *The Key to the Tower* (Heinemann, June). And jolly good it sounds as well. "Do I contradict myself?" as Walt Whitman wrote. "Very well then I contradict myself".

Strong drink and steel teeth

Having trouble with the folks over the holiday? You should meet **Harry Pearson**'s family

It was Boxing Day and Uncle Alf was talking. Alf had a guttural Teesside accent. His voice was so deep it sounded as if it was playing at the wrong speed. Barry White was a castrato by comparison. Uncle Alf spoke very loudly, as if trying to make himself heard above the noise of heavy machinery. When he started talking the windows rattled and the tea tray shuddered. Often by the time he'd finished an anecdote the milk in the jug had turned to butter. Uncle Alf was frequently attacked in pubs and social clubs. The motivation behind the assaults baffled him. It was less of a mystery to the rest of us.

We were in the front room of my great-granny's house in Marske. The front room was bakingly hot. My great-granny came from a generation to whom heat equalled luxury. A coal fire crackled in the grate, an electric radiator hummed. The house was more thoroughly sealed than a pharaoh's tomb. An ambient temperature sufficient to wilt a cactus was considered a bit parky by my great-grandmother.

There are 15 of us in this tiny room. Older women sit in armchairs, younger women on dining chairs, small children on the arms of the chairs and the laps of aunties, men line the walls. I am 12 or 12 and stand between my father's feet, his hands on my shoulders. My father has positioned himself by the front door with its promise of fresh air and escape.

From his niche between a bookcase and a cabinet filled with holiday souvenirs, Uncle Alf says, "Now here's a thing," and members of the family who wear glasses remove them, knowing from bitter experience that vibrating spectacles can chafe-up nasty blisters in the nose and ears.

"I was in the top house the other day," Alf continues, "minding my own business, like. And I've just finished saying to our lass that these bloody strikers at British Steel want to get themselves back to work instead of lounging round sinking ale all day like a pack of lazy swines, when suddenly a stool comes flying across the bar and hits us on the shoulder." He pulls a grim face, "Luckily it had clipped the back of our lass's head on the way through and that had taken the sting out of it, otherwise it might have done me real damage. Aye, totally out of the blue. Can you believe that?" And we all shake our heads, not in agreement, as he thinks, but in amazement at Alf's startling lack of self-awareness.

Uncle Alf shrugs at the strangeness of humankind and yells, "All I can say is, it's come to a pretty pass, when a bloke can't go out for a quiet drink without some hooligan hurling furniture at him."

"And is your lass all right?" someone ventures.

Alf fixes the questioner with a look that suggests this kind of enquiry is the stupidest thing he has ever heard in his life, "Of course she is," he bellows. "Our lass? She's tough as teak."

And deaf as a post.

My great-grandmother sits in a wing-backed chair, nodding. She is a tiny woman, white-haired and much admired. She is dignified and softly spoken. Unless the church bells ring. At the first peel she leaps to her feet, shaking her fist and shouting, "Damn them bloody Wesleyans!"

The bells are actually the responsibility of the Church of England across the street; chapel-goers don't ring bells, but nobody likes to contradict my great-grandmother on this point. She was born a Roman Catholic and gave up her religion to marry a Methodist ironstone miner. He had fathered five children and then suddenly, and with that lack of consideration for his wife for which Northern men are infamous, he died. In later years, the loss of her religion had made my great-granny bitter. I'm not sure if she thought she was destined for hell, but the warmth of her house suggested she was preparing for it.

After her husband died great-granny worked as a cook and a caretaker and took in washing. She and her children were always smart, her house was immaculate. "There are two types of working class," my great-grandmother would opine, "respectable working class and rough working class. We are respectable working class." She didn't say who was rough working class. Because her son-in-law, my grandfather, was in the room and she wanted to spare his feelings.

My grandfather leaned with his back against the wall over by the door to the scullery. He stood in the same place every time he went to great-grandmother's house. There was an oval stain where he rested his head and his Brylcreem had soaked into the wallpaper.

My grandfather believed in disciplined hair. Any wayward locks were ruthlessly dealt with. He went to a barber called Jack Hyde.

"What can I do for you today," Hyde would say.

"Cut it till it bleeds," he would reply.

My grandfather was fastidious about all aspects of his appearance. To watch him putting on a trench coat – the tucks beneath the belt arranged equidistantly, each fold of matching size, the flare calibrated to a microscopic tolerance – was to witness a major feat of precision engineering; when he said he was going to shave you did not expect to see him for at least an hour; polishing a pair of shoes was the work of a morning.

Sometimes when paddling with him in the sea at Redcar or Whitby I would catch him looking down. Passers-by might suspect he had spotted something interesting in the water, but I knew he was actually checking to see that his trouser legs were evenly rolled.

The bottoms of my grandfather's trousers were subject to particular attention. It was not uncommon for him to buy a pair and ask the tailor to turn them up a quarter of an inch. As a youngster my grandfather's idol had been his cousin, Gilbert, a trooper in the 17th Lancers. On summer days Gilbert swam in the river Tees at Yarm. A ladies' man, he kept his bowler hat on while in the water, so that he could tip it to any women out strolling along the bank.

My grandfather was rough working class because he came from a broken home. When he was a teenager his father ran away with another woman. Having little appetite for travel he didn't run far. Just around the corner to the next street, in fact. On the day of the departure, my grandfather came home to find his brothers, Joe and George, sitting on the front step with faces like fiddles. "Dad's buggered off," Joe said.

"Well, that's nothing to cry about," my grandad, who didn't have a high regard for his father, replied.

"I'm not bothered about him going," Joe said. "It's just that he took the three-piece suite with him and now we've nowt to sit on."

They remedied the situation later that night: waiting until their father went out with his new girlfriend, then breaking into his house and stealing back the furniture. "You should have seen us," my grandfather would say. "Our Joe with a settee on his head and me and George with an armchair each, walking down Garnel Street by gaslight like a herd of giant tortoises."

My grandfather's mother was a painter at Linthorpe Pottery. When the brothers were children, at the onset of winter she would smear their chests with goose grease and sew them into their vests. She cut them loose when the hawthorn blossomed. I can imagine the smell that must have erupted as the stitches were unpicked, although I try very hard not to.

Uncle George was my granddad's younger brother. When his teeth fell out he made his own dentures from steel plate. Once when he was walking along the beach at Saltburn a wind had blown up and George got sand in his mouth. Walking up the high street he saw a horse trough, so he took his dentures out and gave them a rinse in it to get rid of the grit. While swilling them about the steel teeth slipped from his fingers and sank

> The evening will climax when my grandmother, fortified by cold tea wine, does her party piece, tucking her skirt into her knickers and turning somersaults while singing 'Swanee River'

George rolled his sleeves up and stuck his hands in the water to retrieve them. At which point the parish priest walked by. Seeing Uncle George on his knees and up to his elbows in the horse trough, he stopped. "Are you all right, George?" he asked. "Yes, thank you, Father," George said, "I'm just looking for my teeth."

My grandfather tells this story now. My grandmother and her three sisters laugh. The sisters live together. They are dog lovers. They have a nervous mongrel terrier named Scrap. Once the doctor had come to visit one of them who was sick. The sisters were often sick. Illness was their hobby. It was diverse, fascinating and cheap. This day the Doctor left his new homburg on the stand in the hall. When he came back he found Scrap had pulled it down and ripped it to shreds. The doctor was angry, the sisters were horrified. "Fancy," they said. "An educated man like him leaving his hat where a dog could get it."

The sisters' laughter is drowned by a strange, gurgling cackle which sounds like the noise our Hoover makes when it sucks up one of my toys by accident. The source is two elderly and wild-looking women whose relationship to our family is so tenuous and labyrinthine that only a creature of higher intelligence (ie Auntie Nora) could possibly unravel it. They came from one of the ironstone mining villages of east Cleveland – isolated communities on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors. Weird places. The nearest thing in Britain to the hillbilly towns of the Appalachians.

Years later I would work in a pub in nearby Guisborough. The pub had a function room and a dance on Saturday nights. One week the regular band couldn't play so the owner hired a piano player who'd been recommended to him by the window cleaner.

The piano player had greasy hair and a dinner-jacket so baggy it looked as if it had been designed to be worn over a rucksack. Febrile menace flickered in his eyes. He played well enough, at first, plinking and plonking merrily through "The Saint Bernard Waltz" and "The Dashing White Sergeant". Then an ageing teddy boy's moll with hair the texture of candy floss requested some rock 'n' roll. The pianist launched into "Great Balls Of Fire". By the time he reached the second chorus he was on his feet pounding the keys with his fists and baying and yelping like a foxhound. I'm not sure how they calmed him down – in my mind I have an image of the manager and a fleet of waitresses hosing his crotch with soda siphons – but 25 years later the memory of it still sends a shiver down my spine.

The howling pianist came from east Cleveland.

The east Cleveland relations' mother smoked a clay pipe. They dressed in dark clothes and had powerful religious beliefs based on a mixture of Nonconformism, spiritualism and strong drink. Once the phone rang at home and when my mother answered it, one of the older of the east Cleveland women said, "Did you know Bobby Garbutt was dead?"

My mother said she didn't, which was hardly surprising as she hadn't the faintest idea who Bobby Garbutt was. "Well," the woman said, "to be honest I only found out myself this morning. When I woke up he was standing at the end of the bed asking why I hadn't been at his funeral."

Afterwards my mother had to have a whisky to calm her nerves. Coming into my great-granny's house today, she had seen them and with forced enthusiasm cried, "Oh! I didn't know you two were here!" And behind me I heard my grandfather mutter, "I thought the pair of broomsticks parked outside might have alerted you."

Now the younger of the east Cleveland relations is talking about the home-made cold tea wine she has brought. They have made it in a tin bath in an outhouse. At the mention of drink my father decides it is time to leave. He has been to enough of these things before to know how it will end. Alcohol will prise open old wounds and there will be rows and tears, followed by reconciliation and sentimental songs. The evening will climax when my grandmother, fortified by cold tea wine, and egged on by her sisters, does her party piece; tucking her skirt into her knickers and turning somersaults, while singing "Swanee River".

We gather up our coats. I kiss my great-granny, my grandmother, my aunts, and lastly and reluctantly, the women from east Cleveland, whose skins scuff like suede brushes. We say goodbye. As we leave I can hear Uncle Tommy saying, "Some Saturdays we'd have had 15 pints by the time we got to the dance hall. They wouldn't let you in if you were drunk. We ate mints and stood close together to stop ourselves swaying. Some nights I've got in that dance, gone straight in the gents, locked myself in a cubicle and sat there for the rest of the evening, clutching the edge of the toilet with my knuckles going white, just to stop the room spinning." I hear his wistful chuckle. "Hey, great days, great days," he says and then the door closes.

A bright spark. Born in a stall. No kidding

Bill Greenwell and D J Taylor rewrite seasonal tales as today's authors might have told them

Carol Ann Duffy: Once in Royal David's City

It was in that city. You could see
that David had been there, right royal
except for drizzle on the paving.
Evening like dull pain. Stranger. Manger.
Straw for the mother to deliver
a message from heaven. The poor,
the mean, and the moody. She was Mary,
and the kid arriving at half-seven.

Christ. Jesus. Messiah. His new skin
crinkling in starlight. The local oxen
paddled their tongues by the crib,
dunking their thick heads in shadow.
It was holy all right. You could taste
the dew in his ducts, hear his gurgle
like a broken tap. His maiden mother
was as gentle as Carnation. Or Lux.

Birth was a redemption, a revelation
of good. Ace. Perfect. Brill. Bright.
Love. Faith. The whisper of a child
is like the rustle of feed. You look on
and this is no playpen, no stable.
Weak and helpless. No, he was going
up in the world. Angel. A bright spark
born in a stall. God's gift. No kidding.

(BG)

Anthony Powell: A Christmas Carol

24 Dec. Marley obit. *Contrary to* various statements that have appeared in the press, I was not in fact at Eton with Jacob Marley (financier, descended through his mother's side from the Somerset Marleys) – he KS, four years older than I, Benson's. Never the less, we saw a good deal of one another in the post-Oxford period.

Marley always seemed good example of capable business figure, while displaying not the smallest interest in arts. Business now supposed to have devolved on associate Scrooge (possible ramification of Devonshire Scrooges? – for some reason nothing in *Debrett*) whom V says we once met at some gathering of City types, tho' can't recall. By all accounts, formidable figure.

25 Dec. Dined with Cratchits, distant connexions of V's (on mother's side, possibly descendants of Suffolk Cratchytte offshoot). Goose. Trimmings. Plum pudding. Gin – perfectly drinkable (I did not see label). Cratchit nice, obsequious, clerkish type. Grace (after meal, surely solecism?) pronounced by Cratchit's younger son, Timothy, unassuming child. Heaven knows how little susceptible to "cuteness" in the young, but both V and I by no means unaffected. (DJT)

A S Byatt: St Luke's Gospel (chapter 2)

It might begin:

The stable lies dank, fecund and welcoming. Two oxen with calm liquid eyes stare gravely on. In a corner, an ass stirs. There is a crib, of course, and a hook for a lantern. Hens scavenge restlessly through the straw. Alone in the pale, delicate, timeless light, the child sings his limited lovely note. Why does this elemental tableau, this quintessence of burnt residue scraped from the mythological crucible, give us pleasure?

Or it might begin with Joseph and Mary travelling by donkey along the Judaean back roads. Joseph's thoughts buzz around him like clouds of locusts. He thinks of the angel Gabriel, is moved by the automatic power of myth, then repelled by caution. The myth is too big, too easy, too much for his unborn child. He must be *oblique*.

Mary sits astride the donkey. She has not, so far, complained. Now she says: "Joseph. Joseph. Please listen to me. Please listen. When all this is over, when it is finished, when it is complete, I must have something to do. *I must have something to do.*"

He is surprised, startled, taken aback. "But you are the mother of our Saviour."

"I know. But my iconic significance is appalling. *It is appalling.*"

Or it might begin within the walls of blood and muscle, the dense accumulations of flesh and protoplasm, within the womb. That unborn heart, imminent and immanent. Blood. Oblation. Sacrifice. Those words are ancestors knew. Of such are their myths, and our own. The baby stirs and twists. Language is within him. The words crackle along his pre-partuitive synapses. (DJT)

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Dominica: a heroic crumple of an island about the same size as the Isle of Wight

Photograph: G Fischer/Network

Every possible shade of green

Simon Calder meanders through Dominica's vibrant rainforests in the company of parrots and hummingbirds

You can tell a place has become a big new destination when travel agency staff start abbreviating the name – as they have just started to do with the Dom Rep. Visitors love the place, and the locals love the visitors. It is one of the greatest tourism success stories in the Caribbean, enjoying a boom in arrivals as news spreads of miraculous beaches and minuscule prices.

All of which is highly unfortunate for the island I have just visited, Dominica. These lines refer to an entirely different destination. Touristically, the Dominican Republic is doing splendidly well – while anyone who has anything to do with tourism in Dominica is probably looking at this page in trepidation; on the last occasion there was a story on the lesser Antilles, a helpful map was included, showing full details of the Dom Rep. No: this is Dominica.

"No" is the word that recurs among the gracious, gentle islanders when they speak to visitors. And *talk they do, with relish, emphasising all that is positive about Dominica.*

No, we have no significant violent crime, I was told shortly before Christmas. In the same week, the number of murders on the island of Jamaica exceeded the 1995 total, with an average of two deaths per day.

No, we have not sold out to tourism. If you want mile upon mile of high-rise hotels lined up along a beach, try somewhere else. And there is a very good reason for that: No, we have no beaches.

*That, you discover eventually, is not quite cor*rect. But the few patches of sand, mostly volcanic, are nothing to write postcards about. The only swim I enjoyed was from a river beach, where families picnic beneath benignly sprawling rainforest. Dominica has nothing to do with palm-fringed golden sands (of the kind you might find in, say, the Dom Rep). It is instead a heroic crumple of stone that erupted from a fragile patch of the Earth's crust. Today it seems frozen in mid-ascent, a jumble of rifts and peaks aiming for the grey Caribbean sky.

Grey is not a colour that the travel industry promotes, particularly in the context of skies. But on Dominica it is a regular reality – a consequence of the collision between Atlantic air, heavy with moisture, and the highest mountains in the eastern Caribbean.

Yet you will search in vain for evidence of gloom. The colours on Dominica are as intense as the most frantic afternoon downpour. The furious rainfall – four times as heavy as in Britain – conspires with the rich, red soil to invent startling tones of yellow, garnished with abrupt flashes of scarlet. All this takes place against a background that explores every possible shade of green.

Echoes of this anarchic colour scheme appear on every street in the capital, Roseau. The city – if that is not too bold a term to use for somewhere so motley – is rambling towards dilapidation. So *the pinks and blues applied randomly to spare sur*faces in Roseau are washed to a pale pastel.

Dominica's national institutions are crammed into awkward new concrete blocks and elegant old villas. To pick up a copy of the only good map of the island, for example, you must seek out the Department of Lands and Surveys. This ministry resides in a freshly painted clapperboard office that sprouts from a field on the fringe of Roseau. While you wait for your change, an official explains that this was originally part of the Rose's estate.

Rose's grew on the lavish lime plantations that clung to the terraced foothills. In the days when Dominica was one of the British Empire's more irrelevant appendages, its prime function was to supply lime juice for the Navy. Eventually, better nutrition and artificial substitutes meant that the industry was eradicated as surely as scurvy. So limes went the way of vanilla, another one-crop wonder.

For reassurance that the island can coax a living from the rumpled terrain, follow the citizens

to the Saturday morning market in Roseau. Barrows are heaped high with fruits of little labour: bananas and coconuts, passion fruit and paw-paw, even the odd recalcitrant lime.

The energetic faces of the traders and shoppers testify to the extravagant ethnic mix of the Dominicans. If you wondered how the Caribbean got its name, the answer is in the bright eyes and sharp features of the people of Carib descent. When *Europeans overran the region and began to exploit* it, the Caribs retreated to Dominica. A few thousand of them have endured disease and decline to survive in a corner of the island, and their blood has spread widely across the population. Added to the cultural cocktail are several generous measures of Africa, plus dashes of old colonials and Irish adventurers; there is a lot more red hair than you would expect, dancing through the market.

Given the good-natured crush in the aisles, you judge that the rest of this isle of 70,000 souls must be empty.

It isn't, of course, though solitude is an easy commodity to procure hereabouts. What really gets you when you escape the crowds is the silence: there isn't any. If you're after peace and tranquillity, you're in the wrong place. Yattering parrots bicker with shrill hummingbirds to see who can deafen the visitor most adroitly. Breezes swish through the impossibly tall palms, and with persistence bring coconuts crashing down. Fortunately, the fall is more often interrupted by succulent vegetation than by a tourist's head.

That's because there are so few of us. While the inhabitants of nearby Antigua are outnumbered seven to one by the annual number of visitors, in Dominica the residents are firmly in the majority. One reason is the airport: that patch of Tarmac just north of the capital isn't a car park, but the landing strip for Canefield airport. The biggest plane *you can arrive in holds 30 people.*

The island is on the cruiseship circuit, and from next May it will be a port of call for Thomson holidaymakers. But a day trip is almost a disservice to an island whose soul resides high in the hills or hidden beneath thick undergrowth in one of the 365 rivers that (allegedly) irrigate the island. You, and Dominica, deserve better than a few snatched hours together.

You deserve to experience the air in idle isolation. I wish I could share it with you – feeling, *smelling, tasting each sweet, warm breath, heavy* with the moisture from a million trees.

On an island little larger than the Isle of Wight, choosing a highlight is like selecting a gem from a sackful of diamonds. But on a warm and steamy island, the jewel has to be a hot and humid hike to the Boiling Lake.

My inclination for any such jaunt is to take the bus (in Dominica's case, a battered old minibus) as far along the way as possible. Yet this drops you five miles from your destination – with the large matter of a 3,000-ft mountain, plus a connivance of thick, sticky mud to impede your progress.

Nature opens her bid with a dense rainforest canopy, where flora writhes for light. Then, with altitude, you see why some call Dominica "a tropical Scotland" – rugged mountainsides splashed with tenacious grasses and modest moss.

Then signs of life are, literally, dissolved. The Valley of Desolation is fearsomely appropriate in its name, a seething vale where sulphurous waters and vapours bleed constantly from the earth.

This is merely a warning salvo for the day adventurer. Another hour of aching muscles lifts you to a window on the centre of the world. The ground suddenly vanishes, and you almost topple into a cauldron that looks a darn sight bigger than the airport. Two things will stop you from resting here: the harsh steam that marches across the surface, *concealing the simmering more often than not; and* the urgency to descend, or meet your end in the mountains in the dark.

Darkness doesn't simply sidle into Dominica; like an uninvited guest at a Christmas party, the night slams, clumsily, into the existence you were enjoying. So you slip into a decaying old hotel for a drink. Over a hogmanay-sized dose of Dominican rum, I got talking to the proprietor. There's trouble with the Dom Rep, he mourned. The country is threatening to change its name: to Dominicana.

The closest convenient big airport to Dominica is Antigua, which has regular flights from Gatwick. From Antigua, LIAT flies several times daily to Canefield airport.

Simon Calder's report from Dominica for a 'Travel Show Caribbean special', is to be shown on 1 January on BBC2 at 8pm. The programme also features the actress Amanda Redman in Puerto Rico and the comedian Arthur Smith in Antigua.

The fewer bottles of inflammable liquid flying around Europe, the better

Humbugs incur VAT at the *usual rate*, so why shouldn't beer and bicycles? Scrooge would be all in favour of the European Union's initiative to remove duty-free allowances in 1999. And I am afraid that I am, too.

On 1 July 1999, the EU will remove the right to buy 200 cigarettes and a few litres of booze free of duty and VAT when travelling from Britain to one of the other 14 member countries. The alarms are already being raised. Take Britain's biggest charter airline, Britannia. My flight tickets for a charter from Gatwick have just arrived, but they were hard to locate in the ticket wallet, such was the flurry of duty-free publicity.

If the EU's plan goes through, we are told, in-flight standards will fall at once: "The airline would immediately reduce its cabin crew complement by one on each intra-EU flight." Crew would be hit, as well as passengers: "Across the whole of its network, Britannia estimates that more than 200 jobs ... would be lost."

And did you know that, on average, each cabin crew member earns £1,500 per year in commission on duty-free sales?

This is according to a new survey by Coopers & Lybrand, commissioned by Manchester airport. But Britannia says cutting staff is just one of many options that is being considered. Before inspectors from the Inland Revenue get involved, Britannia says the earnings by cabin crew is actually £1,200.

Other statements and assumptions *in the report intrigued me,*

Simon Calder

too. A total of 680 people in the North West would lose their jobs as a result of the ending of duty-frees, the result of transferring £35m worth of sales elsewhere. Yet this £35m of spending would not add a single extra job in the High Street.

I think we have to be careful *about the propaganda from the* duty-free industry. Costs of travel will certainly rise after 1999, but if ferry operators and airlines want to concentrate on providing safe, efficient travel rather than selling stuff, that is fine with me. Hoverspeed, for example, boosted pre-Christmas sales by offering a mountain bike for £75, and for the same again you could buy 24 gallons of Ruddles. Try balancing that on your handlebars.

More seriously, there is an important safety consideration in cutting duty-free sales for air travellers: the fewer bottles of highly inflammable liquid that are flying around Europe, the better. The image of the British Airtours 737 tragedy in 1985, was of some survivors escaping from the wreckage of the Boeing still clutching their *precious plastic bags of liquor and* tobacco. This happened at Manchester airport, which is now so forcibly pushing the case for selling duty-frees.

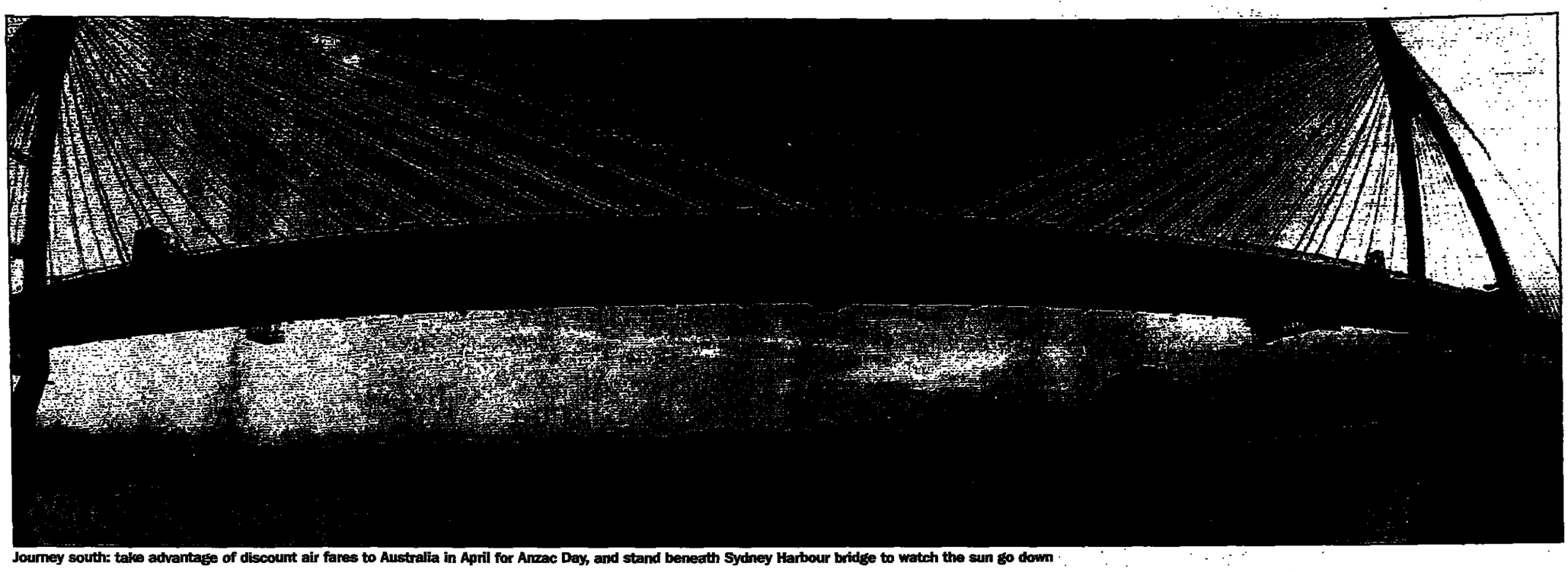
These pages aim to inspire and inform. Marilyn Lloyd of Swansea writes to say a recent story on New York's Hudson River Valley inspired her, but she felt the information misdirected her.

"It is possible to travel from Grand Central as well as Penn Station to Poughkeepsie. In fact, it is quite a lot cheaper – $10 instead of $17". Seven bucks better off. Ms Lloyd disembarked at this Hudson River settlement. Then she wished she hadn't.

"The station master warned us: 'This is no place for tourists. It's a tough, violent town, a frontier *town. If you stay here you'll get* robbed or shot.' So we took his advice and caught the next train to Cold Spring, and discovered an extremely pretty (but expensive and twee) town overlooking the Hudson, with one lovely, old hotel, The Hudson House – $150 per night B&B. We enjoyed an hour's stay there.

"Then we returned to Grand Central Station, New York. Yes, the train journey is delightful and we enjoyed our day. Such a contrast in such a short space of time (75 minutes) to the skyscrapers of Manhattan."

Cycle through Morocco, eat Welsh cakes in Patagonia,



Journey south: take advantage of discount air fares to Australia in April for Anzac Day, and stand beneath Sydney Harbour bridge to watch the sun go down

Where to go in '97

By Rhiannon Batten

JANUARY

Britain: If you need a break after the pressures of Christmas, take yourself off to one of the three British Center Parcs (0990 200300). Here you can pamper yourself with a health treatment and burn up the calories. A typical three-night break this month would cost between £164-£205 for two and this includes accommodation and use of the pool (but all other facilities are charged separately). If you're over 50, the cheapest way to get there is with National Express (0990 010104) who are offering a "go anywhere in Britain for £9.99 return" fare between 6 January and 13 February.
Europe: Thessaloniki, Cultural Capital of Europe 1997, is featured in the *Independent Magazine* next Saturday. Visit the Greek birthplace of Atatürk, the father of the Turks, and start your year on a cultural footing. For details of events throughout the year contact the Greek National Tourism Organisation on 0171-734 5997.
Worldwide: Celebrate Ramadan on 10 January on a Jasmin Tours (01628 531121) holiday. Between 10 January and 9 February the company is offering special trips to see the lights in various Middle Eastern cities. If you haven't had your fill over the Christmas period they will even provide you with festive food, including *Iftar* – a special breakfast. Feast yourself after sunset and spend the next day working it all back off again. Prices start at £349 for six nights' B&B (not including airport taxes and visas) at Aqaba on the shores of the Red Sea.
Other dates for your diary:
20 President Clinton inaugurated in Washington
31 Jan-2 Feb The Snowboard World Cup in Quebec
31 Schubert's 200th anniversary in Austria

FEBRUARY

Britain: Go to work on an egg, with an egg-decorating holiday from HF Holidays (0181-905 9558). A four-night holiday in Malhamdale in the Lake District costs £179 per person including full board, instruction and your basic egg kit. After a morning spent learning how to transform a humble egg into a "fine and beautiful ornament" you are free to stride out and explore the local area.
Europe: Take advantage of the cool weather and cycle through the Draa Valley in Morocco with The Imaginative Traveller (0181-742 8612). This off-road cycling tour is new for 1997 and only operates between January and April. For £525 you get accommodation (some of it camping), most meals, bicycle hire, transportation of luggage while you cycle, and the services of a cook. What it doesn't include is the flight out, but if you're really keen you could always cycle down through Europe and take the ferry across from Spain.
Worldwide: Between 2 and 5 February Copacabana is the focus for a huge festival – the Fiesta de la Virgen de Candelaria. This isn't the Copacabana where Barry Manilow fell in love, but a small, bright town on the Bolivian shore of Lake Titicaca. Pilgrims and dancers from all over Bolivia and Peru fill its streets, climb up the 14 stations of the cross overlooking the lake, drink, eat and are merry chasing bulls round a stone corral.
Other dates for your diary:
6 Chinese New Year
11 Shrove Tuesday (and Mardi Gras in New Orleans and Rio)
The Aberystwyth Indian Food Festival (01970 617995) all month.

MARCH

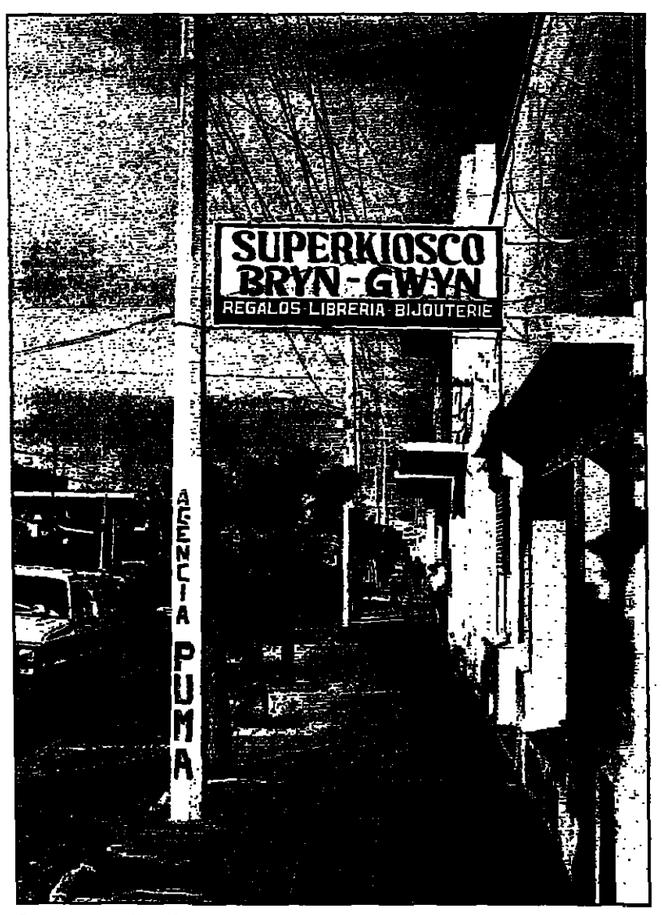
Britain: If you don't fancy the coast at this time of year, head for London instead. The 28 March sees the opening of the London Aquarium (0171-401 3433) at the old County Hall on the South Bank. Stroke a stingray, peer at a piranha or stare at a shark as you pass through the aquatic landscape constructed around the 30,000 exhibits. Prices will be £4.50 for children and £6.50 for adults with family tickets for £20.
Europe: Alton Towers' Spanish sister, Port Aventura (00 34 77 77 9090) on the north-east Spanish coast, opens a new white-knuckle ride, Stampida, on 17 March. This will be the first twin-track wooden rollercoaster in the world, and the 80ft drops should all add to that "out of control" feeling the promoters are aiming for. The park is based around five different areas from the Mediterranean to Imperial China. Entrance is around £21 for adults and £16.40 for children, and the park is open between 17 March and 26 October from 10am to 8pm (midnight between June and September).
Worldwide: Go for the alternative Welsh experience and spend the first day of the month, St David's Day, eating Welsh cakes in Patagonia. This is the best time of year to visit the wilder parts of southern South America, but if you're expecting summer to be hot you'll be underdressed. The Chubut valley in Argentina is perilously hanging on to its Welsh roots. In Gaiman they still produce a Welsh language newspaper and traditional Welsh teas are served in the shops but the Williams' are becoming prefixed by Miguels and Juans rather than Dais and Ifors. There is plenty to see but if it all seems just too adventurous you could always sit back in St David's, Pembrokeshire, with a copy of Hank Wangford's *Lost Cowboys* and imagine yourself on the gaucho trail instead.
Other dates for your diary:
8 International Women's Day
17 St Patrick's Day
26 Independence Day Bangladesh
28-8 Dec William Wallace 700th Anniversary Exhibition in Stirling
29 Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race
30 Easter Sunday and the start of British Summer Time

APRIL

Britain: Lancashire is where the action is in April because that's where the Southport Clowns Festival is being held. Between 24 and 27 April there will be a gaggle of clowns running up and down Southport's pier (the first to be built purely for pleasure in Britain) and around the grand villas of Lord Street. Details from Clowns International on 0181-444 8406.
Europe: According to Eurostar (0345 303030), you will by now be able to travel direct from Preston to Paris or from Birmingham to Brussels. They have promised us this for almost as long as the service has been up and running, so we are not holding our breath. Those travelling from destinations in the east of the country will have to wait until the summer if all goes to plan.
Worldwide: April 25 is Anzac Day so commemorate it by taking advantage of Austravel's (0171-734 7755) discount fares to Sydney between 16 April and 30 June. For £623 including departure taxes and the £2 Sydney noise levy you can travel to Sydney and back on BA or Qantas and stop over twice along the way. You can choose from Rome, Bali, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Frankfurt and Kuala Lumpur and for an extra £55 you can increase the number of stopovers to four. The climate isn't at its best at this time of year but the attractions will be less busy and, if it's a tan you're after, you can top it up in Bali on the way home.
Other dates for your diary:
27 Greek Orthodox Easter
18 Opening of Millennium Celebration in Gdansk

MAY

Britain: Tease those green fingers down in the Garden of England by visiting Christies Garden Festival (01580 211702) in Kent. Between 24 May and 1 June a number of privately owned gardens will be opened to the public. The 26 May is also St Augustine's Day and, as 1997 is the 1400th anniversary of the arrival of St Augustine in Canterbury, this is the year to stay in Kent and enjoy some of the special events being offered. Try Pat-a-Lamb at Mount Ephraim Gardens (01227 751496) or visit the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Orchard near Faversham (01795 535286). Visit on the 10th or 11th and you'll catch the Blossom and Flower Festival.
Europe: *The Pénichette*, a barge-lover's favourite, is 20 years old this year, so climb aboard one and celebrate with a boating trip down one of France's rivers with French Country Cruises (01572 821330). A week in a Pénichette in May would cost £889 for four people including all equipment and bedding but not fuel. Alternatively head further south to the Camargue. At Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, the annual festival on 24-25 May swamps the town.
Worldwide: Taking place only on odd-numbered years, Kanda Mitsuri happens in Tokyo in mid-May, on the Saturday and Sunday closest to the 15 May. It's a traditional Shinto festival, where 200 portable *mikoshi* – or shrines – are heaved through the streets by sake swigging crowds. And there are other celebrations – archery contests, horse riding and dancing to name but a few. For information on Japan, contact the Japan National Tourist Office on 0171-734 9638 and for flights (this is generally a good time to travel) try Quest Worldwide (0181-5473322). It has a flight on BA or Quantas for £640 return, including taxes, to Australia. It allows you a stopover in Bangkok or Singapore on the way out and a stopover in Tokyo on the way back. This is much cheaper than a ticket just to Tokyo and back.
Other dates for your diary:
7-19 Cannes Film Festival
20-23 Chelsea Flower Show



Go west: eat Welsh cakes in Patagonia on St David's Day

JUNE

Britain: Visit Glasgow in 1997 to see how it's preparing for the role of 1999 UK City of Architecture and Design. Go between 27 June and 6 July and catch the International Jazz Festival (0141-552 3552) or just browse around the city's museums and art galleries, not forgetting the Rennie Mackintosh designs. Glasgow Tourist Information is on 0141-204 4400.
Europe: 12 June is Russian Independence Day and a national holiday but if you stay in St Petersburg until the summer solstice on 21 June, through to 11 July, the city lets loose for the White Nights celebrations – the main festive period of the year. With permanent daylight, people work themselves into a frenzy, especially on the Neva embankment. Here people crowd the banks to watch the nearby bridges opening up in the middle of the night, and you'll probably have to dodge flying champagne corks as they do so. It's also a big cultural event with ballets, concerts and plays happening all over the city. The two main festivals during this time are the rock festival and the classical Stars of the White Nights. Contact the Russian Tourist Agency on 0171-486 0586.
Worldwide: Be in Hong Kong at midnight on 30 June to witness its handing back to Chinese rule. If you have time to stay for a while, book early and arrive by the 14 June to see the Dragon Boat Races in the harbour. This commemorates Chu Yuan, a third-century BC poet who threw himself into a river in Hunan Province in protest at the corruption of the government. Onlookers raced to save him in their boats but they were too slow. These days the onlookers throw dumplings into the water to keep the fish from eating him. The Hong Kong Tourist Association (0171-930 4775) will have more details.
Other dates for your diary:
17-20 Royal Ascot
23-6 July Wimbledon

JULY

Britain: The Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight (0151-478 4136), about an hour's drive from Manchester, is worth a visit at any time of year, but especially in the summer. Lord Leverhulme built the gallery in memory of his wife following the construction of his model community around his famous soap factory. The gallery houses an impressive collection of Pre-Raphaelite works alongside a collection of Wedgwood.
Europe: Why not head out to New England from Manchester stopping off to see the Northern Lights on the way? Icelandair (through the Airline Network on 0800 727747) has return flights from Manchester to Boston for £396 including tax (plus £10 if you travel at a weekend) in July. With this ticket you can stay in Reykjavik for up to three nights, which will give you just enough time to stare at a geyser, slip on a glacier, plunge into a hot spring and grab a glance at the famous lights – if the sky is clear while you're there.
Worldwide: Get to New England for American Independence Day on 4 July. The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (413 243 0745) has been going ever since a man called Ted founded it in his barn in 1932, and it's now become one of the most important dance events in the States. It runs between mid-June and early September in the village of Becket in Massachusetts. Nearby, the Boston Symphony Orchestra has a summer concert series at Tanglewood. Alternatively you could keep cool with an ice-cream from the home of Ben & Jerry's at Waterbury in Vermont. The story goes that Ben and Jerry were childhood friends who sent off for a booklet telling them how to make ice-cream. They found they had a flair for introducing the locals to wacky flavours and have since been filling people's freezers across the Atlantic.
Other dates for your diary:
2 Palio in Siena
2-6 Henley Royal Regatta
5-27 Tour de France

AUGUST

Britain: Pretend you're the outdoor type, but do it the easy way with the new Wye Valley Walk which Acorn Activities (01432 830083) is organising for 1997. You can stride out during the day and enjoy the views free from the weight of baggage (which is transported along the route for you) and safe in the knowledge of a good bed for the night (at either a hotel or a B&B). To cover the whole walk would take 14 days but shorter sections or taking days out along the way can be arranged. A typical three-night package costs £270 per person. Time your walk around the 17-22 of the month and you can combine it with the Three Choirs Festival taking place in Hereford.
Europe: Even though Munich's Oktoberfest begins in September, go to Bavaria in August and aspire to higher things with a stein or two of beer in Kulmbach, which is credited with both brewing the most beer in Bavaria, and drinking it. Up until the 15th century, citizens of this beer-drinkers' paradise were able to brew their own beer and, as you might expect, they know a thing or two about production. The main beer festival is the nine-day long Beer Week between July and August but go easy on the Kulminator 28 – not a Schwarzenegger film, but probably the strongest beer in the world. To find out the exact dates contact the local tourist information centre nearer the time (00 49 9221 95880) or the German Tourist Office (0891 600100).
Worldwide: One of the best bargains in air travel has just become several degrees better. The unlimited travel airpasses offered by Canadian Regional Airlines (through AirPass Sales, 01737 555300) now offer a preposterous range of destinations. The one-week East Pass (£145) gives you unlimited standby flights from Boston, USA to Gander in Newfoundland, and from Halifax across to Winnipeg. Here you can pick up the parallel West Pass, and continue to Seattle, Vancouver and Calgary. Best value of all is the £299, three-week national pass that entitles you to cover the entire country.
Other dates for your diary:
1-10 World Athletics Championships in Athens
10-30 Edinburgh Festival
14 Independence Day in Pakistan
15 Indian Independence Day
16 Palio, Siena
24, 25 August, Notting Hill Carnival

SEPTEMBER

Britain: On the 8 and 9 September, Oxford shuts off one of its main streets

see the Northern Lights, and walk in the Wye valley

for two days to hold its traditional St Giles Fair. These days there are just as many gut-wrenching, neon-coloured rides as there are hoop-la stalls, but it's all great fun, anyway. The best time to go is in the evening, so you can spend the day taking in the architecture, cringing at the shrunken heads in the Pitt Rivers Museum or sitting in one of the pubs enjoying a pint. Oxford Tourist Information is on 01865 726871.
Europe: Go to Futuroscope (0171-499 8049 for information) in September when it's less suffocated by rampaging schoolchildren, and enjoy its geometric buildings, feats of aquatic sculpture and array of celluloid options without the hassle of the queues. Easily reached from Poitiers, this cinematic and scientific theme park is definitely worth a visit in 1997.
Worldwide: Visit South Africa in springtime. Flower lovers should head for Namaqualand in the north-east corner of the Northern Cape. The valley floor gets submerged beneath a covering of huge orange daisies, and the mountainsides are a mass of pinks, scarlets, blues and yellows. To find out where the blooms are nearer the time, call the Flower Hotline (00 27 21 4183705).
Other dates for your diary:
27-5 October, Oktoberfest, Munich

OCTOBER

Britain: Avoid the crowds and visit the island of Iona during the autumn. This year marks the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St Columba here, so during the summer months the place will probably be heaving with people. For details of special St Columba events contact Oban Tourist Information Centre 01631 563122.
Europe: Gdansk celebrates its 1,000th birthday this year. If you go to Poland between April and November you can go along to one of the special arts, sports or philosophical events the town is planning. Alternatively, wait for the half-term break and go across for the official closing on 31 October. This year LOT, the Polish airline (0171-580 5037), is introducing direct flights from Gatwick to Kraków five times a week, and from Manchester to Warsaw three times a week. For connecting flights to Gdansk it will save you around £50 each way if you buy your ticket when you arrive in Poland. Polish Tourist Information is on 0171-580 8811.
Worldwide: If you venture across to Nepal in October, try to time this with Tihaar (known as Diwali in India) towards the end of the month – dates have yet to be fully fixed. The "festival of lights" lasts for five days, the third of which sees houses decked out with hundreds of candles and oil lamps in the hope of attracting Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. The rest of the time animals are strewn with garlands and the children race round throwing firecrackers and giving *tika*, or blessings, to their siblings. If you've got the time, trek up in the Annapurnas, get your fill of *dhal baat* in Bhaktapur, jump in the river at Bhiretanti and raft down the Sun Kosi before heading back to live it up for a while in Kathmandu.
Other dates for your diary:
2 Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) 5758
26 British Summer Time ends

NOVEMBER

Britain: If you enjoyed Port Sunlight in July go for Saltaire, near Bradford, in November, another model village

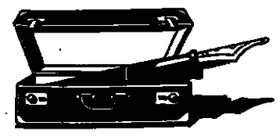
Head east: be in Hong Kong on 30 June for the hand-over to Chinese rule. The event will be noisy, dramatic and poignant. Worth arriving early to see the Dragon Boat Races in the harbour

but this time based around Salt's Mill. These days the mill (01274 774993) houses three art galleries, including a permanent exhibition of works by David Hockney. On the way home, find out whether Huddersfield really is set to take off as the new clubbing capital of the UK, with a night out at Babalonia in Beyond Beach Babylon, or go along to The Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (01484 425082) between 19 and 30 November.
Europe: Autumn is a good time to visit Tuscany and Umbria. On 11 November in Sigillo, near Perugia, take part in the San Martino Festival where the events centre around drinking lots of wine and eating chestnuts. The legend goes that Martino was travelling happily along on his horse when he galloped past a shivering beggar. Not one to turn away from the needy, the saint promptly gave the beggar his enormous cloak and since then the countryside has been shrouded in warmth for a few days each November. The festival is celebrated all over Italy but Sigillo is the place to do it in style. While you're there don't miss the frescoes by a local painter, Matteo da Gualdo, in the village church. The Italian Tourist Office is on 0171-408 1254.
Worldwide: It is worth missing the 50th anniversary celebrations for Indian independence (see August) and waiting until now. The climate is at its mildest at this time of year. Try a romantic camel trek through the deserts of Rajasthan and plod out to the camel fair at Pushkar where traders race, parade and sell dromedaries in their chaotic thousands. Alternatively, go spotting kingfishers as you float downstream on a boat through Kuttanad in Kerala or spend a week imitating India's maharajas on a luxury train journey to the palaces, cities and monuments of Rajasthan. Invest in a copy of the *Rough Guide to India* and start planning a trip now or call the Indian Government Tourist Office (0171 437 3677) for advice.
Other dates for your diary:
27 Thanksgiving (USA)
5 For Guy Fawkes night par excellence, head for Lewes, East Sussex

DECEMBER

Britain: Have a day out at the races on St Stephen's Day (Boxing Day to the rest of Britain) at the Down Royal Racecourse, seven miles south of Belfast. This is also a big social event. The track has good facilities so if the weather's bad you can watch the racing from behind the comfort of the bar's windows. Tie it in with a trip to Dublin and go on a literary pub crawl. The Irish Tourist Board is on 0171-493 3201.
Europe: December is a good time to indulge in a trip to the Continent, especially when it involves sharing the journey with a crowd of Norwegian merrymakers. Color Line (0191-296 1313) is running its usual festive offer of a Newcastle-Bergen mini-cruise at £70 per person (for four travelling). This includes B&B for three nights.
Worldwide: Maximise your daylight quota for the year and make for the South Island of New Zealand on Midsummer's Day, 21 December. As you will see from a new adventure travel series, *Walker's World*, which begins on Sky One on 4 January, the latest craze in New Zealand is "zorbing". This is nothing to do with Greeks, but involves rolling down hills inside an inflatable plastic ball. For more details contact New Zealand Tourism Board, New Zealand House, Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ (0839 300900, a premium-rate number; fax 0171-839 8929).

AUGUST



something to declare

Trouble spots
Theft threats around the world

Belgium: After three successful and one failed raid in which explosives were used to blow cash machines from their concrete mountings, operator Banksys said cashpoints in dangerous locations would be starved of cash. In one spectacular heist 5 million Belgian francs ($156,000) were stolen this week from a Banque Bruxelles Lambert cashpoint near Brussels. (Reuter)

Iran: There have recently been a number of cases of tourists being asked for identification by bogus policemen, who have then made off with the visitor's wallet and currency. Keep passports separate from other valuables. (Foreign Office Travel Advice Unit)

Tanzania: Incidents of mugging and theft are common, especially on public transport and beaches. Food should not be accepted from strangers as it may be drugged. Armed car thefts occur fairly frequently. If approached by policemen asking for money for alleged offences, insist on identification before going to a police station to make any payments. (Foreign Office Travel Advice Unit)

England: As with any country, the major towns of England have their dangerous spots, but these tend to be inner-city housing estates where no tourist has any reason to be. The chief risk on England's streets is pickpocketing, and there are some virtuoso villains at work in London, especially on the big shopping streets and the Underground. (*The Rough Guide to England*)

Nigeria: Violent street crime and armed robberies are prevalent in Lagos and occur elsewhere in Nigeria. Harassment by policemen and soldiers is common throughout the country. Travel outside cities after dark is unsafe; even in daylight armed hold-ups occur. Visitors should arrange to be met at the airport and taken to their destination. (Foreign Office Travel Advice Unit)

Bargain of the week

Such is the competition on flights between London and Zurich – with British Airways, British Midland and Swissair – that few people need pay more than £99 plus tax on the route. Inter-Europe Travel (0171-630 5188) has this fare, plus £18 tax, on British Midland until Easter; Lupus Travel (0171-306 3000) does better with a £99 fare on BA with only £17.10 added for tax. The "stay away Saturday night" restriction that applies to most cheap fares does not apply to all of these.

True or false
Minimum check-in time for British Airways World Traveller (economy) passengers is 2 hours – BA Worldwide Timetable

False, so long as you have taken the precaution of joining the British Airways Executive Club (free; call 0345 222111). The Club's latest magazine says "Executive Club members who hold a confirmed booking will have their reservations held for up to 45 minutes for long-haul flights and 30 minutes for short-haul destinations prior to departure time, as long as the reservation was made at least 24 hours in advance."

Visitors' book
Olive's Guest House, Atkinson, Dominica, West Indies (001 809 445 7521); £7.50 per person per night, plus meals

Every day is the most wonderful day I've ever had ... and then tomorrow starts and is more wonderful still – *Kate Sturgess, Oxfordshire*

Olive is the best cook on the island, and the best herbalist – *Sissy Hiesmayr, Vienna*

The Garden of Eden, the food, the view and the knowledge of the island was greatly appreciated.

PS: if ever in Canada, my home is your home – *Erroll Hind, Calgary*

Parfait: bel emplacements, bon repas, bonne discussion – *Noel Levet, Grenoble, France*

TEL: 0171 293 2222 overseas FAX: 0171 293 2505

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Children come first: a new Austrian hotel is one of many to offer snowman-building, sleigh-rides and other distractions for youngsters

Making it a doddle for guests who toddle

Adrian Bridge tries to take the strain out of a family break

There were times when I wondered whether booking into a pension explicitly catering for parents with children under the age of five was such a good idea.

Six in the morning on 1 January was one of them. Having danced in the New Year to the strains of Strauss's "Blue Dannbe" (well, the pension *was* in Austria) and washed it all down with a heady mixture of *Glühwein*, schnapps and bubbly, the last thing I really wanted was to be woken by a chorus of howling toddlers – even if two of them were my own.

Later, bleary-eyed at the breakfast table, I noticed that Tizian, a stocky little boy with a penchant for growling and lashing out at everyone in sight, was about to lay into my two-year-old son. I was reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre's famous line: "Hell is other people." Only he didn't get it quite right. Hell is other people's children.

The Bergfried "Babypension" just outside the medieval town of Gmünd, on the road between Salzburg and Klagenfurt, is one of the growing number in Austria that are aimed at young families. With a child of their own already (and another clearly on the way), its proprietors, Horst and Andrea, were pretty clued up as to what parents with small children really need. Basics such as cots, potties, highchairs and bottle-warmers were an automatic part of the service. A colourful playroom, heated paddling pool and plates sporting the *Lion King* motif were nice extras. On top of that, there was plenty of organised outdoor activity: for those with children out of nappies, skiing at the nearby resort of Innerkrems; for the rest, snowman building, sleigh-riding and torch-lit treks through striking pine forests.

Having already experienced several less than stress-free "holidays" with our two (ages two and four), it seemed like an idea worth exploring. Tizian apart, having other children around was bound to make life easier. And if ours did start playing up – the inevitable temper tantrums here, spilling drinks and shouting loudly there – what would it matter: so would everybody else's.

A good case in point: mealtimes. Although occasionally we attempt to dine out *en famille*, it rarely gets beyond a single course and a single glass of wine and frequently ends in a hurried exit, with apologetic looks all round. Here, we could relax. When the children were through, they could run wild – and be in good company.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority of the Bergfried's guests are German: thirtysomething couples from Dortmund and Hanover who burn down the autobahns with their little Janinas and Florians to spend a week recharging the batteries in a classic Alpine setting.

Many who were there in the first week of January had returned for the second, third and even fourth time, clear converts to the cause (or to Horst's *Wurzn*, root-based home brew – something which, in his thick Austrian accent, he insisted was purely "medicinal").

That, coupled with the fact that we were only 10 families anyway, made for a genuinely intimate atmosphere. With so much in common, it was easy for us to break the ice. The obvious drawback was that much of the conversation was centred on our respective offspring – and, even worse, as the week progressed, on their little coughs and colds and other, less savoury ailments.

The Bergfried was one of the trail-blazers in what has clearly become a lucrative part of the Austrian holiday market. When it opened up in 1984 there were hardly any such establishments. Such has been their success that today there are more than 80.

Nowhere is the trend more marked than around Gmünd itself, in the Liesar and Malta valley – otherwise known as the "Valley of the Baby Hotels" (clearly Austria's answer to the Valley of the Dolls).

You know you have arrived when, a few miles along the road going south from Gmünd you are suddenly confronted by a gigantic model of a dummy alongside a sign announcing that this is Trebesing – "Europe's 1st Baby Village".

What this means in practice is an entire complex boasting a host of child- and toddler-friendly hotels and lodging houses, a special "Nappy Wanderers' Way" (buggies welcome), a mini-farm and "Ford Baby City", a mock American Indian village where the children can play at being cowboys.

The Trebesing village was the brainchild of Siegfried Neuschitzer, who says the idea came to him in the early Eighties after friends with very young children complained that they were being treated like second-class citizens wherever they went. From modest beginnings, the concept has grown. Recent refinements include ski school for two-year-olds (nose-wiping thrown in), and mountain climbing with nappy change at the summit (presumably an optional extra).

Back at the Bergfried, the general consensus was that one could probably take this baby business a bit too seriously, and that in the bigger establishments there was a tendency to over-organise. As we gathered at the bar when the children were safely asleep (but, of course, monitored through the computerised baby alarm system), we agreed that the most relaxing thing about the whole experience was simply being in a tolerant atmosphere.

And for all the wonderful facilities, toys and fun-type activities, there was equally a consensus that, with all our children still under the age of five, the earliest any of us could look forward to something approaching a real holiday would probably be about the year 2010.

For more information on baby and family hotels in Austria, contact: Kinderhotels Österreich, Postfach 10, A-9580 Villach/Drobollach (00-43-4254-4411); Bergfried Babypension, A-9853 Gmünd, Treffenboden 13 (00-43-4732-2147). Prices per person per week start at about £300 – and there is no charge for children under six years old.

At our 10th birthday this year there was perhaps one thing to celebrate above all others: the quality of our pictures.
No paper has been associated with high-quality photography more than *The Independent* and 1996 has been no exception, as this selection of some of the best proves. From the stark image of a young victim of the Afghan civil war lying in hospital, to the roistering charge of the Household Cavalry in rehearsal, to a bull's blissful moment during the Royal Show in West Sussex, it is an eclectic selection which proves that we are not only on the spot when it comes to the big event, but are there to record it with sensitivity and wit.
Tom Pilston, who took the picture of the Afghan victim, is this year's winner of the Nikon Features Photographer of the Year award. Two others, David Rose and David Sandison, also won awards.

FEBRUARY One more victim of an unresolved conflict: a young casualty of a land-mine in the continuing conflict in Afghanistan between Russian invaders and Mujahedin fighters lies in hospital near Kabul with severe head wounds
Photograph: Tom Pilston

IMAGES OF WAR, PEACE,

JUNE Nothing to do with BSE – just a way of keeping cool: a farmer at the South of England Show in West Sussex hoses down his over-heated prize bull during one of the hottest days of the summer
Photograph: Brian Harris

JUNE (left) Women and the Church are now good friends: choirgirls at Wells Cathedral School laugh their way through a rehearsal

Photograph: David Rose

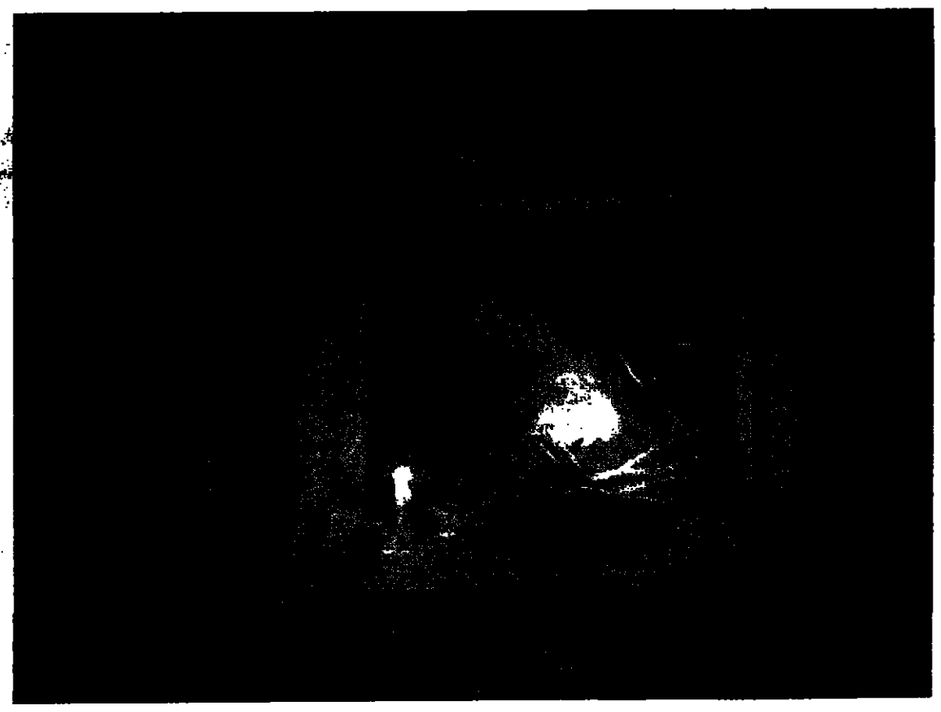
OCTOBER (right) Union of speed and skill: Robert Howley shrugs off Gareth Rees, Wasps stand-off, at Loftus Road. The Cardiff scrum-half scored two tries

Photograph: Peter Jay

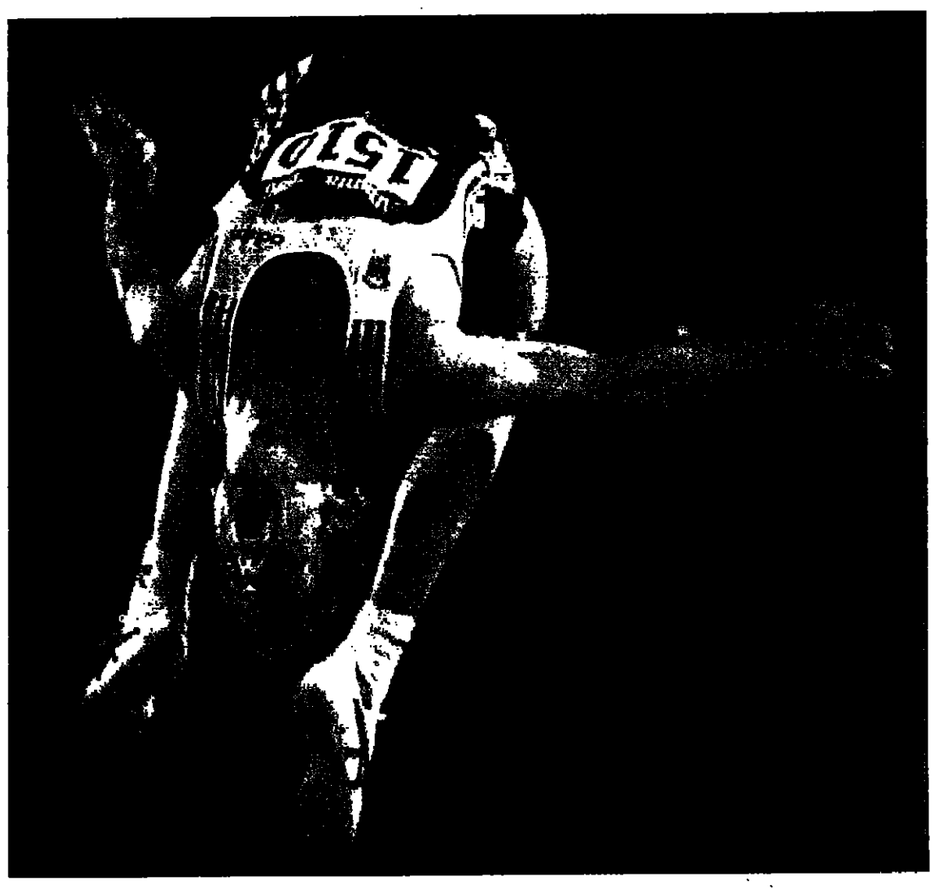
DECEMBER Showing off: on a cold and frosty morning, soldiers of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment display their undeniable panache as they practise their manoeuvres on Wormwood Scrubs Fields, in west London, for a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Olympia International Show Jumping Championships Photograph: John Voos

TRIUMPH... AND BULL

AUGUST Just for kicks: a ballerina from the Joffrey Ballet Company dances with verve and grace to the music of Prince at London's Royal Festival Hall Photograph: Laurie Lewis



OCTOBER Awaiting eviction: 23-year-old Swampy, who dug himself into a berth 50ft underground to try to prevent construction of the Exeter-Honiton road scheme in Devon Photograph: Tom Pilston



JULY Victory is a gasp away: Steve Smith makes his final jump during the Olympic Games in Atlanta to take a bronze medal for Britain Photograph: David Ashdown

Vision of true progress

Anna Pavord on the legacy of a year's planting

The future in one's own garden is always more interesting to think about than the past. Planting trees and shrubs in the still, suspended days around Christmas gave me the pleasant illusion that we have made progress this year. Of course, I learnt long ago that the trick in the garden is to look, like a blinkered horse, only in certain directions.

The path through the pergola is a usefully soothing view, now that the leaves have been raked up. This is tunnel vision to a T – provided I go down to the second pair of posts before opening my eyes. If I don't, it's difficult not to see that these posts are listing determinedly to the right. That is a legacy of the autumn gales.

And the bottom border in the kitchen garden can bear looking at too, cleared of the tomatoes that I was still picking at the end of November. It is thickly blanketed now with the richest, darkest muck I've been able to get my hands on for a long while.

Some areas of the bank where we first planted now need a complete overhaul. Comfrey, spotty-leaved pulmonaria and craneshills, put in to cover the ground instead of docks and nettles, have done their work almost too well. They have swamped less aggressive neighbours, the comfrey rolling like a lava wave over spurges and day lilies, artemisias and woodruff.

But there are masses of bulbs in there too, so I'll leave the job of clearing out comfrey until the spring, when what's underground now will be above ground and easier to see.

The arrival of the new trees and shrubs has given me a cast-iron excuse to abandon routine clearing-up jobs and get planting. The star of the newcomers is *Magnolia wilsonii*. Why did I want it? Sometimes, in the six-month interval between order and delivery, I forget why I wanted a plant. Not with this one, though. I saw it at Caerhays in Cornwall in late spring when the rich, fruity smell of its white flowers spread in a cloud all around it. I looked it up when I got home and discovered that unlike other magnolias I've fallen in love with – *M campbellii, M liliiflora, M soulangeana* – this one had a fighting chance of succeeding in our soil. The others like a billet more acid than we can provide.

The best known magnolias have flowers that sit upright like candles on the branches. But the pure white petals of *M wilsonii*'s flowers hang down to enclose a ring of shocking red stamens. At first sight the flower seems archetypally chaste and pure. When you get close, you see it is a sexpot. The nub in the centre of the stamens develops into a fruit, a buff pink colour in October.

It's named after the plant hunter Ernest Wilson, who introduced it into this country from China in 1908. It was, wrote Wilson, "quite a common shrub in the woods of western Szechwan, especially around the town of Tachien-Lu". He found it growing high, between 7,000 and 8,500ft, often on the edges of woods or along mountain streams, and sent seeds of it home to James Veitch's famous nursery.

It can make 2ft of growth a year, if it is suited. The pale bark on the newest twigs of my specimen shows that it grew all of that last year, while it was still in its pot. I've planted it in the kind of half-shaded spot that Wilson's description of its Chinese home seems to suggest. And it is on the top of the bank, so that I'll be able to look up into those nodding flowers, if they come.

The magnolia is an uncharacteristic plant for our kind of garden. I've never had the territory (or the desire) to garden in the grand woodland manner, but these big species magnolias (*M wilsonii* can get to about 25ft) look as though they deserve a larger space rather than the bit of rambling rectory that it has in fact got. But it is planted in a corner made by two boundary walls, and we will only ever see it against sycamore or sky. It doesn't have to mill with the rest of the crowd; it can stand disdainfully apart.

Quite different in character are two fancy elders that I ordered. If you can't beat them, join them, was the philosophy here. Wild elders spring up all over the garden and they obviously enjoy the damp, heavy soil we have. So while uprooting some of the ordinary elders, I've been planting the cut-leaved *Sambucus nigra laciniata* and gold-leaved *S racemosa* "Sutherland Gold" instead.

Coloured foliage can be tricky, drawing too much attention to itself, but this golden elder is reasonably muted. The variety called *Plumosa aurea* is the brightest of them, but that wasn't what I wanted. Sutherland Gold is not only a gentler colour, it also burns less easily in sun than *Plumosa aurea*. The cut-leaved elder is perhaps the most beautiful of the whole family: the foliage as elegant as a fern's and the flower heads bigger than those of the common elder.

"Guincho Purple" I already have, the purple appearing as a bronze flush on the elder's leaves rather than the very heavy, all-over saturated colour that you get in the purple nut tree, *Corylus maxima* "Purpurea". The flowers' heads are tinged with pink. It gets its name from the garden in Northern Ireland where Mrs Vera Mackie, the owner, first grew it. Elders will put up with quite deep shade if necessary. Shade mutes the colours still further.

Two fan-trained fruit trees were on the order, too. These were not new additions exactly, because both were replacements. The apricot ("New Large Early") that I planted this time last year never broke into leaf this spring, so the nursery gave me another one – bare root, rather than pot-grown as the previous one had been.

The old dead apricot came smoothly out of the ground with the root still as neatly pot-formed as when it had first been planted. That was the problem. The roots had never had to face the real world, and couldn't cope when they did. I'm much happier with the rangier root system of the new tree, which had been grown in the open ground and lifted just before delivery. The variety this time is "Alfred", slightly later cropping than "New Large Early", which the nursery unfortunately no longer had. Both these varieties are less prone to dying than "Moor Park", my first apricot.

Third time lucky, I hope. Apricots are easygoing fruit, where they are suited. Even in our mild bit of the West Country, they need a sunny wall. But they are much easier to manage outside than peaches. They don't get the debilitating leaf curl, and they crop on old as well as new wood, so pruning isn't so critical as it is with peach trees.

The old apricot went on to a bonfire, along with some sappy branches of a fig that I risked pruning now rather than in March. There was half a wheelbarrow full of bindweed roots smouldering in that fire, too, as well as a vicious branch of the tender, evergreen Cherokee rose (*R laevigata*) that had torn open my head several times this year. The bonfire was cathartic: a few old enemies vanquished, a fragile end-of-year truce established in the garden.

The winter garden requires tunnel vision and a safe retreat

PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE WRIGHT

Duff Hart-Davis

A single E-40 wind turbine, over 200ft tall, has gone up high on the Cotswolds in the face of bitter opposition

You can see it from the Iron Age burial mound known as Hetty Pegler's Tump. You can see it from Nailsworth and Amberley and the outskirts of Stroud. In short, you can see it from many points of the compass and from miles around, spearing the skyline in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a terrible tribute to the futility of present planning controls.

I refer to the single E-40 wind turbine, over 200ft tall, which has gone up high on the Cotswolds near the village of Nympsfield, in the face of bitter local opposition. For the time being it easily holds the trophy for the most-hated object in Gloucestershire, just as the entrepreneur behind it, Dale Vince, is not exactly last in the most-hated-person stakes.

It is now four years since, acting for the German firm Enercon, he first sought permission to erect turbines on the site. Fatal damage was done to the conservationists' cause when Stroud District Council – swayed into the belief that wind energy is "green" – gave permission for him to build two smaller E-33 masts. Later he applied for a single E-40, and when this was refused, took the matter to appeal.

A local protection group was formed in Nympsfield, and demanded a public inquiry, on the grounds that 400 people had objected. Rejecting their request, the Department of the Environment announced that the matter would be decided by written representation.

When the inspector's report was presented in September, it took the protesters' breath away. It admitted that the turbine would do significant harm to the village, where the structure would be "an alien and intrusive feature", and it agreed that the scheme conflicted with "existing and emerging" conservation policies. And yet the inspector said he was powerless to stop it going ahead, since Stroud had already given permission for two turbines – and one would be less damaging than two.

The villagers were enraged. They were also incredulous. The report revealed, as never before, that the Government's rules on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were absolutely worthless.

Nevertheless, the protesters determined to battle on. It so happened that the nearest point at which the turbine's supply could be fed into the national grid was in the graveyard of St Joseph's, the Catholic church on the outskirts of Nympsfield. For 10 days and nights the villagers maintained a picket, in company with two local priests – one Protestant, one Catholic – blocking access to the site in the hope that they could prevent the Midland Electricity Board (MEB) from making the connection.

Then one evening a police inspector arrived, announcing that he had "come to assess the opposition". His aim, he said, was to avoid a breach of the peace, but if the villagers obstructed the MEB in the discharge of its lawful business, he would have to arrest them all and detain them in jail until the work had been completed.

At 11am the next day the police returned, escorting the MEB, their arrival heralded by the blowing of a hunting horn and the ringing of the sanctuary bell. The forces of law and order found the churchyard blocked by a semicircle of chairs, each occupied by a protester, as if in the front row of the stalls at a theatre. After a parley, in which the two priests took part, the MEB withdrew for the day, and the villagers celebrated a great victory.

Yet they knew the reprieve was temporary. They knew that if the MEB took out a court order, they could not continue to resist – and so they were steamrollered into defeat. The National Trust, meanwhile, had belatedly realised that the turbine would spoil the view from parts of Woodchester Park, one of its newest acquisitions. Horrified, it made a last-minute attempt to stop it, but withdrew because of the likely costs of legal action.

Furious arguments still rage about what the turbine will or will not produce. Its champions claim it will provide power for nearly 1,200 people; its detractors, that an average output of 150 kilowatts will boil only 50 kettles. What is certain is that in still weather it will produce no power at all.

The villagers were still in shock from the speed and ruthlessness with which their protests were steamrollered. Somehow they have to find £8,000 in legal fees. Many of them have put in applications for a reduction in council tax, on the grounds that their homes have been substantially devalued. A complaint is being prepared for submission to the local government ombudsman about the behaviour of the Stroud District Council. Fears are rife that another field nearby, which the Church Commissioners want to sell, may fall into the hands of developers.

The whole saga offers a grim illustration of how powerless ordinary people are, even when well organised, in attempting to protect their environment.

cuttings

I've had a worrying year with the wisteria on the front of the house. It is a white-flowered *Wisteria venusta*, fabulously scented and trained out on parallel wires so that it covers most of the space available on that south front. But gradually it has been dying back and the foliage has had the pale, sickly look of lime-induced chlorosis.

For some time I have been dosing it with Sequestrene, a chelated iron compound which usually helps to overcome chlorosis. But it had no effect. Finally, in desperation, I sent a leaf away to a horticultural scientist, Dr Pickering, who confirmed that chlorosis was the problem. By this time, some new growth was pale cream throughout, with no green colouring at all.

He recommended acidifying the soil with sulphur powder or sulphur chips. The problem, he said, is not a simple one. "If you just make a guess as to what to apply and the dosage is too small, there will be little or no reduction in pH. On the other hand, if the dosage is excessive then pH may be reduced to dangerously low levels. Available phosphate may be 'fixed' in an unavailable form if the pH is decreased too much. This can be overcome by applying a phosphate fertiliser after the acidification process is completed."

Sulphur can be applied directly to the soil around plants. Its acidifying action is slow, particularly through winter, when temperatures are low. Doses need to be high on clay soils, where 4oz of sulphur per square yard would reduce the pH in the top 4in of soil from 7.5pH to 6.5pH. On sandy soil you'd need only a quarter as much. But my wisteria's roots are deeper than 4in. I'll be dosing it for some time, it seems, before the sulphur works where it's most needed.

You can buy flowers of sulphur from garden centres or by mail order from Garden Direct, Geddings Road, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 0LR (01992 441888).

Anna Pavord

Reduced-price insanity

The January sale is crunch-time for the serious shopaholic, writes Jane Furnival

Santa has brought us everything on our Christmas lists. So why did thousands of us feel the need to rush back to the shops on Boxing Day for such treasures as a swimsuit made out of garden string, a cherub with a rugby player's broken nose and a pair of thigh-high boots that fall down? (Those are just the failures I'll confess to.)

Going to the January sales is a primitive ritual. We gather to make a killing. Prices are "slashed" and "cut" and written in blood-red, the colour that makes our brains excited, sexually turned on and sometimes angry. It's a lottery. The promise is prizes for all, if only you rummage enough. Sales are also a great escape from post-Christmas family stress. Shops provide a safe, happy environment with everything neat, a smiley staff and a pampering atmosphere, not to mention the feeling that you, the customer, can do no wrong.

It's usually women who spend, spend, spend on sales but that doesn't mean they are somehow biologically the Shopping Sex. It is simply that they are conditioned to shop, thinks Dr Sheila Rossan, a sexual stereotype specialist at Brunel University.

"It has to do with the fact that traditionally men have been highly directed shoppers because until recently stores were closed after working hours," she says.

Women, on the other hand, have had more spare time and therefore been able to browse and pick and choose. The more ardent women shop in pairs. A recent fly-on-the-wall documentary at London's Harvey Nichols revealed only one woman by herself in the whole store. "Women like someone else's opinion. It's a social activity," Dr Rossan says.

Perhaps for dedicated shoppers, "saleing" is a continuation of the Christmas party feeling, when it is acceptable to be a little out of control. We rationalise our useless bargains by saying we're stocking up. I have seen "salers" copy the purchases of someone smarter next to them in the store. Perhaps Harvey Nicks and Co should try planting a few shoppers with model looks next to the atrocious stock. It would move faster.

"Sale-oholics feel exonerated by the cost reduction," explains Dr Ludwig Lowenstein, the shoppers' shrink, a psychologist who detoxes shopping addicts, or "onomaniacs" as they're known. He will only take a patient if they drop their weapons and go peacefully by giving up their credit cards.

Compulsive shoppers are at the extreme end of the spectrum of the browser-gatherer kind of shopper. Browsers seek a bit of a cheer-up. Compulsive shoppers really think they can fill their inner emptiness with material things. Shoes are at the top of their shopping list – 98.5 million pairs of women's shoes were sold this year – followed by perfume and clothes.

"I feel sorry for those born rich. Some feel they haven't got everything and are often depressed and anxious," says Dr Lowenstein. The less well-off end up committing fraud and going to prison to pay their bills.

Compulsive shoppers are like nymphomaniacs. Just as unsatisfied women rifle through every available man in search of the one who can give them the orgasm they have never had, these shoppers get their fix from the surge of adrenaline they get from spotting what might be ... The Solution, the Ultimate Thing that will really fulfil them. But then, like a drug, the feeling wears off and they have to shop to start the cycle again.

The Duchess of York is their patron saint and Awful Warning. Even when on her uppers, she would spend thousands to get herself out of a downer. She probably couldn't tell you what she bought.

The more controlled kind of shopper doesn't have this hunger. She is a hunter. The Opportunist.

Shawna Moss is a freelance shopping adviser based at London's Grosvenor House Hotel. "Evening dresses are brilliant buys in the sales," she advises. "So expensive otherwise." She takes her clients to dress hire shops which often sell lightly worn Cinderella ball gowns, like One Night Stand (44 Pimlico Road, London, SW1, 0171-730 8708).

Never be impressed by the name tag, she advises. "I see people get carried away by designer names in sales."

Her other tip is to negotiate the sale price down. "The richest women love a bargain. I have one client who can negotiate me under the table. I hide behind the coats."

The biggest sale shopper is a new type, the Sightseer. These use shopping as a form of entertainment, sport or therapy. Malls were built for Sightseers. They eat sandwiches around the fountains while their children play in the see-through lifts.

Primrose Wells, a 32-year-old wedding organiser, and her mother Maggie Evans, 53, are expert Sightseers. "I'm not an addict, but I enjoy it as therapy," says Maggie. The women see their shopping as female bonding, a celebration of the Christmas spirit, an escapade rather than an escape. "There's a lot of camaraderie between mothers and daughters in the changing rooms."

They plan their day carefully, getting up before six in the morning to find the parking space nearest the shop entrances. That leaves time for a civilised breakfast before the shops open. They wear comfortable flat shoes and take only one jumper, tied round their waists, because shops are so hot.

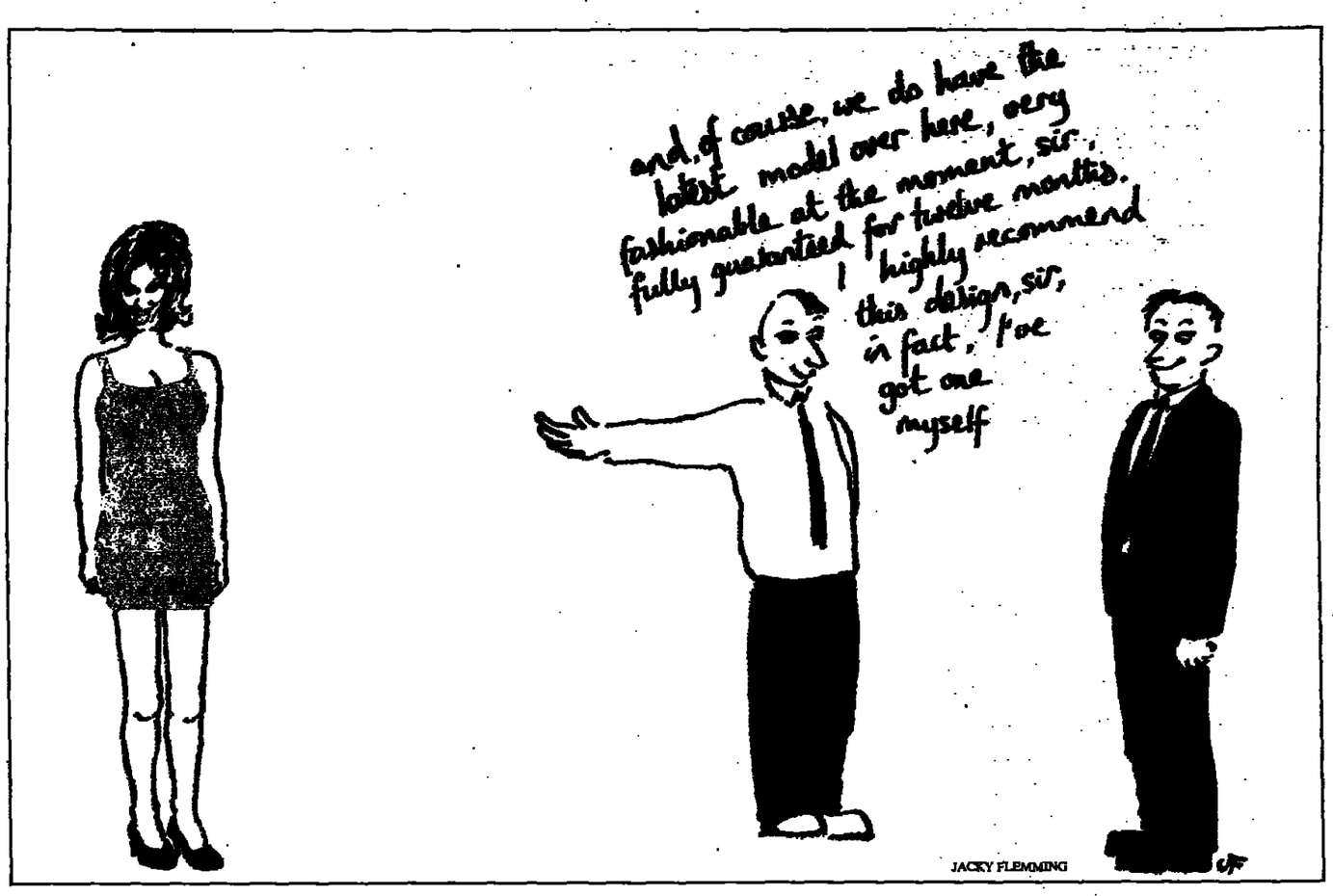
They won't buy special sale purchases, only proper stock. Primrose's big buy last year was nine pairs of roller blades for friends, reduced from £300 to £120 in Macro. "My husband Steve is terrified of going shopping, because I spend money. When you buy something, you rely on men being absent minded. When I hear women in the changing rooms saying, 'What shall I tell my husband?' I say, 'Tell him it's been in your wardrobe for years'."

Are there any men who enjoy sale shopping? Tim Guy, 28, is an HGV driver who counts shopping among his favourite sports. "I go to the sales at the end, when the crowds have died down. At the start of sales, you get 10 per cent off. At the end, you get 50."

While Maggie Evans is at the sales three times a week, her husband Ken, 56, has not been shopping for two years. Why doesn't he shop? "I'm happy with what I've got," he says, absentmindedly.

● Shawna Moss offers help with sale shopping. Tel 0973 638977

● Dr Ludwig Lowenstein offers advice to over-ardent shoppers in person or by letter. Allington Manor, Allington Lane, Fairoaks, Eastleigh, Hants, SO50 7DE. 01703 692261.



Good thing

Philippe Starck's 14" portable TV Tilts conveniently so that you can watch it in bed. If you lose the remote control, whistle and it will answer. A sure collector's piece, reduced to £199 from £230.

Selfridges, Oxford Street, London – sale starts 9am December 27.

Bad thing

Linen pillowcases for £58.65, reduced from £68.95 from The White Company (0171-385 7988). Save your money and marriage by going to bed rather than staying up late ironing them. Lunn Antiques offer similar new linen pillowcases at £34 a pair. Mail order possible. 86 New King's Road, London, SW6 (0171-736 4638).

Sure thing

Most shops give extra discounts, sale previews and reduced price parking to storecard holders. Don't wait to apply on the first sale day or you'll miss the bargains. Apply in advance – and remember to ask for a temporary card in time for the sale.
Harvey Nichols – 0171-235 5000
Harrods – 0171-730 1234
House of Fraser – 0171-834 1515

Starts and stops

six of the best 1997 resolutions

1 Huge spiral-bound diary, £11.99 This diary has a good year planner, important dates, international dialling codes, address pages and a huge notes section at the back – ideal for any international jet setter. From Paperchase (0171-580 8496) branches nationwide.

2 Seven days' large Nicotinell patches, £15.99 The patches have been successful on some people, but different methods of stopping smoking suit different people – including hypnosis, tapes, books and videos. If you do choose to try patches ask the pharmacist first if they're suitable for you, especially when taking other medication. From Boots, branches nationwide.

3 Trainers, from a selection by Nike Make sure that you choose the right trainers for the activity: if you do a lot of different sport go for a cross trainer, for aerobics choose one with extra support around the ankles. But generally make sure you buy the right size as feet tend to swell when doing any sport. From J D Sports (01706 628 012) branches nationwide.

4 'Raw Energy Food Combining Diet', by Leslie Kenton, £6.99 Food combining diets mix carbohydrates with protein allegedly increasing your energetic state and improving your digestive system. From Books Etc stores (0171-379 6838) throughout London.

5 One driving lesson from BSM will cost £16.50 – after which you can book up a course if you're happy with the instructor and the company (which means a good discount) or carry on with single lessons. Look in your local yellow pages or phone 0800 700800 for your nearest branch.

6 Linguaphone Italian travel pack, £9.99 This pack includes a travel cassette, a language cassette, a phrase book and panic cards. Learning a new language is a challenge, but think how impressed your lady friend will be when you go to Florence or Venice and you can talk the lingo. From Books Etc (0171-379 6838) branches throughout London.

PHOTOGRAPHER: TONY BUCKINGHAM
STYLIST: HOLLY DAVIES

Best for the road ahead

Gavin Green nominates his top twelve motors for '97

After spoiling the kids for Christmas, it's now time to treat yourself. January is the second *most popular time* to buy a new car after August, thanks to the kudos of setting a New Year date on the logbook. It's also a much more sensible time to buy than August, not least because all the new models are now safely in place at your local dealer.

This year's top 12 feature six newcomers, proof that it's been a good year for new cars. Major new models of 1997 – which may be worth waiting for – *include a new small Land Rover (on sale* next December), the Renault Scenic (out in June), a new Toyota Corolla (summer) and the Ford Puma (a small coupé due to hit the road in June). In the meantime, here are the best value new cars to go for this January:

Baby cars: Ford Ka. Not so much a baby as a stylish babe, the Ka stands out for its wacky lines, directness and eagerness. The back seat is almost useless and the boot's hopeless, but who cares? Also recommended: Fiat Cinquecento Sporting. Tiny in size and big in performance, the sporty Cinquecento is a hoot to drive and cheap to run.

Small cars: Volkswagen Polo. The best built car in the class, and one of the roomiest. The only downside is that its tremendous popularity means you're unlikely to be able to negotiate much of a discount. Don't buy the 1.0-litre model, though – it's too slow. Also *recommended:* new Ford Fiesta, which is better to drive than the Polo if not as roomy.

Medium cars: *Fiat Brava. The step-*ahead family favourite has the boldest design in the Escort class and drives like a sports car. It's also terrifically roomy. The only downside is a slightly jittery ride, which should be fixed next year. Also recommended: Peugeot 306.

Big cars: Ford Mondeo. This year's *mid-life* facelift has transformed the one-time class journeyman into a class act. More distinctive looks combine *with improvements to the engine, ride* and steering, to produce a well-rounded and comfortable family car. Also recommended: *Peugeot 406*, for its sublime ride and its great looks.

Small executive cars: Audi A4, which sets new standards for style, quality and driver appeal in the class – and easily trumps the old small executive car star, the BMW 3-series. Mind you, the 3-series, despite its age, is still the second best car in the class.

Big executive cars: BMW 5-series. One of the best new cars of 1996 and a machine almost eerily free from fault. It rides, handles and drives brilliantly, and looks bold, if still like a BMW. Go for the 2.3-litre six-cylinder engine unless you really need big muscle – in which case specify the 2.8. Also recommended: Mercedes E-class, which isn't quite as good to drive as the 5-series, but is even better made.

Luxury cars: Jaguar XJ6. Now two years old, the latest saloon is the first Jag with German build quality and reliability. Just as important, it mixes these with all those marvellous, long-standing Jaguar niceties such as wafting ride, Edwardian-sitting-room cabin and great style. Late next year, it will get the new V8 engine, as fitted to the XK8 sports car, which will make it even better. Also recommended: Lexus LS400. Understated to the point of being too plain, the *Lexus is still the luxury car benchmark* for engine refinement and quietness.

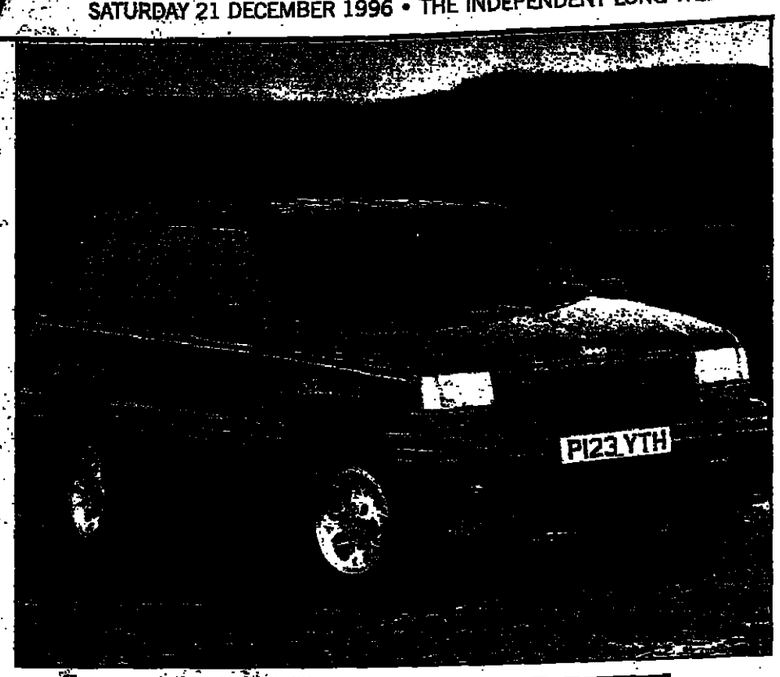
4x4s: Jeep Cherokee. Long in the tooth the Cherokee may be, but it's *still* the best value off-roader on the market and one of the best to drive, easily preferable to a Land Rover Discovery. Its fake wood and leather trim is kitsch to some, but authentically American to others. A facelift and a few mechanical improvements are planned for the coming year. Also recommended: Toyota RAV-4. Easily the best small 4x4, miles ahead of the Suzukis and Daihatsus.

Estates: Mercedes E-class. An expensive way to cart home the goods from the local DIY store, and a pricy way to carry a big family, but it's still the best estate car in the world. Built like a tank and full of brilliant details. Also recommended: Renault Laguna estate; Mondeo estate. Both are roomy, well-made, good value and comfortable.

MPVs: Seat Alhambra. Identical to the Ford Galaxy or Volkswagen Sharan but, owing to its inferior badge, cheaper. Also recommended: the Galaxy or the Sharan – if you don't want to drive a car named after a chair.

Sports cars: Mercedes SLK. Just on sale, but already with a two-year waiting list, the SLK has all the style of the old ex-Princess Diana SL but *only half* the price tag. Hugely desirable, and fabulous to drive. Also recommended: *Jaguar XK8 and MGF. Both prove that* while Britain may have lost its indigenous car industry, it hasn't lost the knack of making great sports cars. The MGF shows that Rover can still make imaginative cars, while the XK8 is the best engineered Jaguar ever.

Supercars: Bentley Continental T. Stupidly expensive (£220,000), stupendously fast and stupefyingly imposing, the Continental T is the best Bentley since they won Le Mans more than 60 years ago. Despite the small size of its maker (Rolls-Royce), the Conti proves that when it comes to making outrageous, hand-built luxury cars, nobody does it better. Also recommended: any Ferrari.



Two to watch for: the Grand Cherokee (above) and the Alhambra (left)

Going up ...but slowly

Penny Jackson gathers predictions for the new market

This year the forecasters got it wrong. Their predictions of *3 per cent now look very* modest when set against an annual increase of at least 7 per cent on the latest calculations of the Halifax. Some hot spots have seen rises up to 20 per cent and more. This year few are showing such caution. The investment bank, UBS, is not alone in predicting an average rise of 10 per cent. For London and the south east UBS expects increases of 15 per cent, while in Scotland, Wales and the North, between 6 and 8 per cent.

*What few seemed to have antic*ipated was the shortage of good property that fuelled prices. Savills, who had predicted an average price increase of 5.2 per cent for this year, sees this situation continuing as long as people's housing aspirations are not matched by the stock available. This year, their *national forecast, which includes a* Labour victory, is an 8.7 per cent rise, with prime country houses leading the field at 14.3 per cent. Here, specialists in their field give their predictions.

General

David Wood, Black Horse Agencies: "Last month saw our highest number of applicants but they are not putting their own houses on the market. However, early in 1997, when they become aware of *the shortage of property, I expect* to see new instructions coming in. They will certainly get from between 1 and 3 per cent more than in the last quarter of 1996. I do not think the election will have much effect on the market, nor a steady increase in interest rates. There will still be good mortgage *deals around next year."*

Ian Darby, John Charcol, mortgage adviser: "If interest rates do not rise and prices continue to increase, the market will become overheated. For that reason we expect interest rates to rise after the election and that by the end of the year they will be 8.99 per cent. That means about a 30 per cent increase in the cost of money which will slow the market down. As a result we see house prices rising nationally by 6 per cent and a bit more in the south east. *We expect the General Elec*tion to have a dampening effect on the market immediately before and after."

London

Yolande Barnes, Savills: "We see prices in prime central London increasing by 7.4 per cent, but *higher increases in the second* division of established locations. These include Wandsworth, Chiswick, Clapham Common, Battersea, Brook Green, West Hampstead, Fulham, Hammersmith and Highbury."

Rebecca Read, Cluttons: "Prices in central London will continue to rise at about 10 per cent. I wouldn't be surprised to see 15 to 20 per cent for the best examples of their kind, although I do not see a return to the boom of the late Eighties."

The North-east

Bryan Jaram, Jackson-Stops & Staff: "We have seen an average increase of 5 per cent over the year. We will see an uplift next year because we always lag behind the south by six to nine months. I expect to see a lot more activity early in the year as there is a great deal of pent-up demand."

The North-west

Graham Adnitt, Jackson-Stops & Staff: "We are not getting a movement of people into the North-west so I cannot see anything forcing prices up. I see the market moving ahead slowly and steadily."

Country houses

Ian Homersham, John D Wood, which largely covers the south: *"More properties should start* coming on to the market next year but unless it is swamped, which is unlikely, it will not be possible to keep up with demand. The scarcity of good houses and the increase in earnings generally in London will push prices up by about 12 per cent. There will be increasing pres*sure on homes in popular locations* for which some people will be prepared to pay that bit extra. There is a strong market at the moment and those considering selling would be advised to take advantage of it."

New homes

David Mote, The House Builders' Federation: "The increase in starts has been lowest in London and the South-east where the demand for good quality homes is *highest. It is critical for more* planning permission to be given. We expect to see a decline in the use of 'brown land' as it becomes more expensive to develop there. We see house prices rising on average by 7 per cent."

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homes & money

New laws that spell trouble. Fear of Finance.....page 18

What should I do with £10,000 next year?

Interest rates are still low in most large economies, and most financial advisers still think there is better value in well-chosen stock-market based investments in 1997. *The Independent* has asked five financial advisers to recommend specific investments suitable for investors with a lump sum of £10,000 to put away in the coming year. Their objectives may vary slightly, from a seven-year plan to fund future school fees to building income for future retirement. Here are their recommendations.

Eastern promise on Tokyo's stock exchange: Japan is one suggested investment

Kearn Seagar, managing director of Bristol-based Whitechurch Securities, offers this advice for a couple looking for a good long-term income flow from a spread of low-risk investments.

First, I would recommend a with-profits bond. The underlying portfolio of these bonds usually consists of equities, gilts and property, but the insurance company managing the bond uses its reserves to smoothe fluctuations in value.

I would suggest the NPI With Profits Bond. This guarantees 8.5 per cent in the first year (with 6-7 per cent a longer-term target), which can be taken as income.

One partner should also go for the M&G Corporate Bond PEP, held in the form of a personal equity plan in order to maximise the relatively high income yield obtainable on corporate bonds. This particular bond yields a tax-free 7.4 per cent per annum at the moment.

Finally, I would go for a PEP in the Credit Suisse Income Fund, which currently gives a tax-free income of 4.5 per cent per annum. This is an investment in the UK equity market so the price will vary significantly more than a with-profits bond or corporate bond but as the other two products are fairly low risk the portfolio as a whole is not unduly risky.

The income is lower but the fund should also provide some good capital growth over the years which would give a fair measure of protection against inflation.

Cherry Dodd, senior planning consultant with Bradford & Bingley Building Society, recommends funds for an investor in his late forties.

I would put £4,000 into GT Income Fund, chosen because of the consistently disciplined manner in which the fund is managed, achieving an annualised growth of 14.3 per cent over the last 10 years. A search for undervalued assets rather than high-yielding companies is of overriding importance to its success. It is my favourite fund at present.

Next put £3,000 into Credit Suisse Income Fund, which has achieved an annualised growth rate of 14.8 per cent over 10 years. The fund manager has a strong bias towards manufacturing companies. He believes the consumer boom of the Seventies is unlikely to be repeated, and invests accordingly.

The remaining £3,000 could be invested in Morgan Grenfell UK Equity Income Fund. It has achieved a 15.7 per cent annualised growth rate over five years. It is biased towards FTSE 100 stocks, but maintains some exposure across the range of quoted shares.

To provide the maximum income in retirement, all three holdings should be placed in a personal equity plan to obtain tax-free income, and all dividends should be reinvested until retirement. The first holding should be put into a PEP from the start and the others in the subsequent tax years.

Philippa Gee of Gee & Co in Shrewsbury offers this advice for a couple with £10,000 to tuck away for long-term growth.

I am assuming that both partners already have a mortgage to finance, and the lump-sum is a one-off investment rather than a regular annual amount.

On that basis I recommend £5,000 should be invested into the Schroder UK Equity fund, a well established, conservatively run fund with strong, consistent management and research teams, giving you exposure to an established fund investing mainly in larger-sized UK companies.

For higher-rate taxpayers, this investment should be put in a PEP and, bearing in mind the current market unease and the possibility that share prices may fall over 1997, I think the investment should be staggered into instalments of £500 a month over a period of 10 months, something which is easily achieved with a direct debit.

Secondly, build up exposure to the European sector with a £4,000 PEP invested in the Invesco European Growth Fund. Roy Powe heads the investment team, which emphasises the need for in-depth analysis and risk management, and maintains a limit of one third of the fund invested in smaller companies.

As a much more speculative investment, a sum of £1,000 should be invested into emerging markets. Stock markets in some emerging markets tend not to be easy to trade, so I suggest the Fidelity Latin America Fund. Be prepared for large fluctuations in unit values, as this is definitely a fund for those with steady nerves looking for long-term growth.

> To provide the maximum income in retirement, all three holdings should be placed in a PEP

Roddy Kohn, of Bristol-based Kohn Cougar, looks at investing a lump sum for a young couple to fund the future education of their children.

On the understanding that you both agree that having your money in stock-market based funds is preferable to opting for lower-risk funds, I recommend two PEPs to obtain tax-free income, because both of you are higher-rate taxpayers and expect to be so when your children's private education begins in 2004.

For one of you I would choose the Bankers' Investment Trust from Hendersons because it is a diversified portfolio of international shares, and rated medium risk, which aims to achieve long-term capital growth.

The fund is trading at a discount of 8 per cent, which means buying shares for less than the value of the assets within the trust. Part of the capital is invested in the Far East, Japan, Europe and Australia so it will not be too dependent on the UK or US markets.

For the other I have also chosen an investment trust, Kleinwort Benson's Charter, which has a slightly above-average risk rating because it is mainly focused on Europe. Again all income should be reinvested within the PEP for capital growth. This trust is trading at a discount of 14 per cent which I believe represents an excellent buying opportunity for the long term.

Bhupinder Anand, of London-based Caroline Banks Associates, was voted 1995 Independent Financial Adviser of the Year. Here he charts an investment course for readers with £10,000 to invest in 1997 and with long-term growth in mind.

Any recommendation of an investment portfolio must take into account an individual's personal circumstances, their existing investments and financial planning arrangements.

However, with £10,000 to invest, and with a slightly speculative attitude to risk (say seven on a one to ten scale), my three tips for the coming year are:

Put £3,500 into Schroder Far Eastern Growth Unit Trust. It invests in a range of Pacific-based countries with emphasis on Hong Kong and Japan. Despite the handover to China in 1997, the signs are still strong for market growth in Hong Kong, and with the recent correction in Japan, now is a good time to go in. The fund has a good medium-term track record, and Schroder is renowned for its expertise in the area.

Another £3,500 goes into Baring Europe Select Unit Trust. Despite the problems inherent in the preparations for the single European currency, I feel that Europe has good prospects, particularly with smaller companies, which this fund focuses on. The fund has been a consistently good performer over several years.

The remaining £3,000 could go into Johnson Fry Slater UK Growth Unit Trust. Johnson Fry's recent involvement with the fund has given it a new direction and some outstanding performance figures.

The fund manager relies on a unique statistical analysis of stock selection, aiming for companies that are undervalued against particular indices and ratios.

The fund has been top 10 in the UK growth sector over six months, one, three and five years.

fear of finance

The personal finance industry has made further progress in 1996, helped by the fact that most stock-market based investments, especially unit trusts, tracker funds and corporate bonds, have risen in value, and in spite of the shock waves from Morgan Grenfell's European funds, which led to a short-term reduction in the amounts being invested in a number of other managed unit trusts.

It was a better year for homeowners, releasing maybe half a million of them from the negative equity trap, and it was a good year for most endowment policies, and pension funds. Many investors who never felt brave enough to look beyond a building society for their savings will be looking forward to a windfall of shares, and the chances are they will be more likely to retain them than punters who rushed for shares in privatisation issues in the Eighties, and then cashed them in like betting chips.

Many, but not all, management charges have been reduced, although the more exotic trusts still charge 5 per cent upfront before starting to invest any of the money they attract. Many, but not all, credit card companies have reduced charges in response to increased competition, and household and motor insurance premiums did not start turning up again until the Chancellor gave them a perfect excuse by raising the tax on insurance premiums in the Budget.

I smell disaster, however, in two future changes to the law which will affect personal finance. The Government's proposed bill to allow investors to take out insurance policies to protect some of their assets from being sold to pay for nursing care or having to go into a home when they are old looks like being scaled down to allow policyholders to protect only £1.50 of assets for each £1 of insurance they buy, not the £2 which most insurers and pressure groups like Age Concern want.

The Treasury also wants the right to scale the cover down still further in the unlikely event that it proves too popular and costs the Exchequer too much. It will be a miracle if the proposal persuades more than a handful of families to insure against something 75 per cent of oldies can already dodge by dying.

I am also concerned that outline proposals for compulsory splitting of all pension funds on divorce will end up making more people unhappy than happy.

It is true that women tend to get the short straw at present, but I am prepared to bet the proposed changes will leave most people poorer, especially if the pensions industry succeeds in its campaign to pass all the costs of splitting and transferring pension funds on to the individuals involved.

I see a surge in divorces as the likely losers from pension splits rush to end their failing marriages and limit their future obligations. I also see many injustices when partners who separated some time ago without formally divorcing find that pensions and other assets they built up after separation suddenly become targets for their less successful partners to sue for.

Clifford German

Best borrowing rates

	Telephone	% Rate and period	Max adv %	Fee	Incentive	Redemption penalty
Fixed rates						
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.95 for 1 year	85	0.75%	—	1st 5 yrs:6.03% of sum repaid
Northern Rock	0800 591500	4.89 to 1/1/99	95	£295	—	1st 6 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Lambeth BS	0800 225221	7.45 to 1/1/02	70	£295	—	1st 5 yrs: 6mths interest
Variable rates						
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.75% for 1 year	90	—	—	1st 5 yrs: 6.23% of sum repaid
Hinckley & Rugby	0800 774499	3.74% for 2 years	70	£250	Free valuation	1st 5 yrs: dis rec'd, 3mths int
West Bromwich BS	0121 525 7070	5.10% for 3 years	75	—	1% adv rebated	1st 6 yrs: 6% of advance
First time buyers fixed rates						
Bristol & West	0800 608088	1.95 to 1/10/97	90	275	—	to 30/9/01: 6-8 mths interest
Universal BS	0191 232 0973	6.45 to 1/2/00	90	£295	—	1st 6 yrs: 5% of advance
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	7.49 to 1/1/02	95	£295	—	1st 6 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
First time buyers variable rates						
Staffordshire BS	01902 317317	1.96 to 1/12/97	90	—	—	1st 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Greenwich BS	0181 8588212	3.49% for 2 years	95	£250	—	1st 5 yrs: discount reclaimed
Mercantile BS	0191 2959500	5.99% to 1/8/01	90	—	Refund valn fee	1st 6 yrs: discount reclaimed

	Telephone	APR %	Max LTV	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years) With insurance	Without insurance
Unsecured					
Northern Rock BS	0345 421421	12.9H		£112.66	£102.59
Royal B of Scotland	0800 121125	14.0		£114.78	£101.45
Nationwide BS	via local branch	14.9		£113.15	£102.49
Secured (second charge)				Max LTV Advance	Term
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	7.8	Neg	£3K - £15K	6 mths to 25 years
Royal B of Scotland	0131 523 7023	9.0	70%	£2.5K-£100K	3 years to retirement
Midland Bank	0800 494999	9.6	90%	£5K-neg	5 years to 30 years

	Telephone	Account	Authorised % pm	Authorised APR	Unauthorised % pm	Unauthorised APR
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.84	10.5	2.18	29.5
Alliance & Leicester	0500 958595	Alliance	0.76	9.5	2.20	29.8
Bank of Scotland	0800 805805	Direct Cheque	—	11.0	—	26.5

	Telephone	Card Type	Min Income	Rate % pm	APR %	Annual Fee	Int. free period
Standard							
Co-operative Bank	0800 109000	Advantage Visa	—	0.64N	7.90N	nil	0 days
Capital One Bank	0800 669000	Visa	—	0.797N	9.90N	nil	54 days
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 329024	Mastercard/Visa	—	0.9167	11.50	nil	0 days
Gold cards							
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.50	10.50	£120	46 days
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	£20,000	0.94N	11.90N	nil	56 days
Royal B of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05N	14.50N	£35	46 days

	Telephone	Payment by direct debit % pm	Payment by direct debit APR	Payment by other methods % pm	Payment by other methods APR
John Lewis	via store	1.39	18.0	1.39	18.0
Marks and Spencer	01244 681681	1.87	24.8	1.97	26.3
Sears	via store	1.94	25.9	2.20	29.8

APR *Annualised percentage rate.* B+C Buildings and Contents Insurance LTV *Loan to value* ASU *Accident, sickness and unemployment*
E *Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 22 years.* H.- *Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged*
N *Introductory rate for a limited period.*

All rates subject to change without notice. Source: *MONEYFACTS 01692 500677* *19 December 1996*

Best savings rates

	Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Portman BS	01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.50	Year
Co-Operative Bank	0345 252000	Pathfinder	Instant	£5,000	4.75	Month
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£10,000	5.50	Year
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£50,000	5.75	Year
Teachers' BS	01202 887171	Bullion	Postal	£500	4.80	1/2 Year
Scarborough BS	0800 590578	Instant by Post	Postal	£5,000	5.70	Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£10,000	6.00	Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£25,000	6.05	Year
Cheltenham & Glouc	0800 717505	Direct 30	30 day P	£100	5.50	Year
First National BS	01232 314050	High Yield	30 day	£25,000	6.45	Year
Leopold Joseph & Sons	0171 288 2323	40 Day Notice	40 day	£10,000	6.22	Year
Leeds & Holbeck BS	0113 225 7777	Postal Bonus	30/4/98P	£10,000	7.00	Maturity
Kleinwort Benson	0800 317477	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.20	Month
Halifax BS	01422 333333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	4.25	Quarter
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	4.35	Year
Schroders	0171 382 3301	Special	Instant	£10,000	5.15	Month/Year
Portman BS	0800 663663	Fixed Interest Bond	1 Year	£500	6.60F	Maturity
Bristol & West BS	0800 202121	Year Plus Fixed Rate	1/5/98	£5,000	7.00F	Maturity
Woolwich BS	0800 222200	Fixed Rate Bond	2 Year	£1,000	6.75F	Year
Coventry BS	0345 665522	Fixed Rate Bond	30/11/99	£1,000	7.30F	Year
Sun Banking Corp	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£3,575	7.50F	Year
NatWest Bank	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F	Year
Birmingham Midshires	0645 720721	Inflation Buster	5 years	£1,000	7.00	Year
West Bromwich BS	0990 143668		5 years	£250	7.00	Year
Sun Banking Corporation	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£3,000	7.50F	Year
NatWest Bank	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F	Year
National Counties BS	01372 747771		5 years	£9,000	7.20	Year
West Bromwich BS	0990 143668		5 years	£250	7.00	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 3803388		1 year	£5,000	5.30FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 207 9007		2 year	£3,000	5.90FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 207 9007		3 years	£3,000	5.95FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 3803388		4 years	£5,000	6.20FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 3803388		5 years	£50,000	6.40FN	Year
N'castle Bank Gibraltar	00 350 76168	Nosis Access	Instant	£25,000	6.30	Year
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Offshore 30	30 day	£10,000	6.55	Year
Birmingham Mids Guern	01481 700680	Offshore Fixed	31/1/98	£5,000	6.85F	Maturity
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Millennium Bond	1/1/00	£10,000	7.50F	Year
Investment Accounts			1 month	£20	4.75	Year
				£500	5.25	Year
				£25,000	5.50	Year
Income Bonds			3 months	£2,000	6.00	Month
				£25,000	6.25	Month
Capital Bond		Series J	5 years	£100	6.65F	Maturity
First Option Bonds			12 months	£1,000	6.00F	Year
				£20,000	6.25F	Year
Pensioner's G'teed Income Bond		Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00F	Month
NS Certificates (tax-free)		43rd Issue	5 year	£100	5.35F	Maturity
		9th Index linked	5 year	£100	2.50+rpi	Maturity
Children's Bond		Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75F	Maturity

P *post only* F *fixed rate*
N *net rate* A *All withdrawals subject at 30 day loss of interest*
All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice. Source: *MONEYFACTS 01692 500677.* *19 December 1996*

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Film on release

ACTS OF LOVE (18) Dennis Hopper is nicely understated in his first real romantic lead, in this small-town reworking of *Lolita*.

THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO (U) Patchy live-action version of the children's classic.

ALASKA (PG) Kids' eco-thriller with two children trekking through Alaskan snowscapes to rescue their injured father.

AMERICAN BUFFALO (15) Dustin Hoffman stars in David Mamet's study of small-time crooks planning a heist.

ANTONIA'S LINE (15) (subtitles) Oscar-winning feminist drama, spanning five decades.

BEAUTIFUL GIRLS (15) Breezy, bitter-sweet romantic comedy about a group of thirtysomething buddies.

LE BONHEUR (EST DANS LE PRE) (15) *(subtitles)* Underwhelming French farce about the boss of a toilet-seat factory who finds a new *joie de vivre*. With a cameo appearance by Eric Cantona.

BRASSED OFF (15) Moving drama about the decline of a mining community, as seen through the eyes of the local brass band.

BREAKING THE WAVES (18) Emily Watson gives a towering performance in Lars Von Triers' harrowing epic, set on the Scottish coast.

CHAIN REACTION (12) Brainless and confusing action movie, with Keanu Reeves discovering fusion and setting off a chain of chases and explosions.

A CHINESE GHOST STORY (15) Loopy martial-arts ghost story with effervescent humour and eerie effects.

COURAGE UNDER FIRE (15) Gulf War drama, with Denzel Washington trying to decide whether chopper pilot Meg Ryan should be awarded a posthumous medal for bravery.

THE CRAFT (15) Andrew Fleming's black teen movie about high-school crones.

CRIMETIME (18) A TV-show serial killer gets tips from a real psychopath in this disappointing thriller from George Sluizer.

THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS (18) Hollow sequel, with Vincent Perez.

***DAYLIGHT** (12) When motorists get* trapped in an underwater tunnel, Sylvester Stallone goes against the clock in a disaster movie for the 90s.

THE DAY OF THE BEAST (18) *(subtitles)* Gory, off-target black comedy from Spain.

THE DAY THE SUN TURNED COLD (12) *(subtitles)* A boy accuses his mother of killing his father in this sombre thriller from Hong Kong.

DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT (PG) Mel Brooks's depressingly unfunny parody.

DRAGONHEART (PG) Witty slice of SFX-laden hokum.

THE EIGHTH DAY (PG) Cloying French fable about a Down's syndrome sufferer.

EMMA (U) Gwyneth Paltrow is the irrepressible matchmaker in Hollywood's latest Austen adaptation.

EVITA (PG) Alan Parker's film of the Tim Rice/Andrew Lloyd Webber musical. The iconic Eva Peron is played with panache by Madonna, but the film lacks stylistic coherence and emotional weight.

THE FAN (15) De Niro stalks sportsman Wesley Snipes in Tony Scott's crude and sadistic *techno-noir*.

FAREWELL MY LOVELY (PG) Forties *film noir*.

FARGO (15) Darkly comic thriller from the Coen brothers.

FEAR (18) Mark Wahlberg fails to convince as a psychopathic Casanova in this slick but grim teen-date thriller.

FEELING MINNESOTA (18) Lumpen, loud thriller, with Keanu Reeves as a drifter who hooks up with his brother's wife, played by Cameron Diaz.

THE FIRST WIVES CLUB (PG) Midler, Hawn and Keaton exact revenge on their husbands in a popular but flimsy comedy.

FLED (PG) Incompetent re-run of *The Defiant Ones*.

GABBEH (NC) *(subtitles)* Good-looking but emotionally vacuous piece of Iranian folklore.

THE GLIMMER MAN (18) Witless Steven Seagal vehicle.

A GOOFY MOVIE (15) Goofy does some father-son bonding.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS (15) Jodie Foster directs this chilly, unsympathetic comedy about a dysfunctional family.

INDEPENDENCE DAY (12) Aliens invade the US in this over-hyped sci-fi blockbuster.

I SHOT ANDY WARHOL (18) Lili Taylor steals the show as violently radical feminist, Valerie Solanas, in this meditation on Warhol's 1960s Factory.

THE ISLAND OF DR MOREAU (12) Schlock adaptation of HG Wells's sci-fi classic, with Marlon Brando, Val Kilmer and David Thewlis.

JACK (PG) Abominable comedy from Francis Coppola, with Robin Williams playing a 10-year-old boy.

JAMES AND THE *GIANT* PEACH (U) Part-animated adaptation of the children's classic.

JANE EYRE (PG) Zeffirelli's dull and unsentimental interpretation of Charlotte Brontë's novel.

JINGLE ALL THE WAY (PG) Arnie races to buy his son the season's top toy in this unamusing and hypocritical Christmas comedy.

JUDE (15) Perceptive take on Hardy's tragic last novel, with Christopher Eccleston and Kate Winslet.

KANSAS CITY (15) Altman's mature and inventive study of 1930s low-life desperadoes.

THE LAST OF THE HIGH KINGS (15) Endearing Irish rites-of-passage comedy with a light touch.

THE LAST SUPPER (NC) Grimly emotive Aids movie in which the camera never leaves the room of the dying protagonist.

LONE STAR (15) John Sayles' tightly plotted Tex-Mex murder mystery.

THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT (15) Vulgar but thrilling action adventure, with Geena Davis as an All-American mum and amnesiac assassin.

MICHAEL COLLINS (15) Liam Neeson is the heroic Irish visionary and terrorist in Neil Jordan's historical drama.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (PG) Leaden adaptation of Adrian Noble's RSC production.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE (PG) Cult TV series becomes state-of-the-art spy adventure, starring Tom Cruise.

MR RELIABLE (15) Aussie comedy set in the 1960s, which overstretches both credibility and sentimentality.

MULTIPLICITY (12) Intermittently inspired cloning comedy, starring Michael Keaton as four different *aspects of the modern male.*

THE NUTTY PROFESSOR (12) This remake of the 1963 Jerry Lewis comedy classic sees Eddie Murphy as the fat professor who invents a potion to make him into a lithe Lothario.

101 DALMATIANS (U) Writer John Hughes introduces some *Home Alone* motifs into this live-action remake of Disney's 1961 animation. Sharp design and Glenn Close's pantomime Cruella De Vil are some compensation for what an otherwise redundant exercise.

THE PILLOW BOOK (18) Eroticism and calligraphy from Peter Greenaway.

IL POSTINO (U) *(subtitles)* Touching Neapolitan romance about a postman's friendship with a poet.

THE ROCK (15) Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage as the first men to break *into* Alcatraz.

Two-faced: Andy Garcia plays twins in 'Steal Big, Steal Little'

ROALD DAHL'S MATILDA (PG) Danny DeVito directs and stars in a luridly coloured, cartoonish adaptation of Dahl, packed with obscene vigour.

SECRETS AND LIES (15) Mike Leigh's compassionate family saga about a young woman trying to trace her birth mother.

STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT (12) The eighth *Trek* movie dispenses with the old crew and drafts in impressive *Aliens*-inspired set design and photography.

STEAL BIG, STEAL LITTLE (12) Over-long mess of a movie with Andy Garcia giving two bad performances as a pair of identical twins.

STEALING BEAUTY (15) Liv Tyler plays a girl trying to lose her virginity and find her father in the latest lyrical film from Bertolucci.

STRIPTEASE (15) Risible comic thriller, with Demi Moore.

A SUMMER'S TALE (U) *(subtitles)* Eric Rohmer's beautifully measured study of the tangled love-affairs of a holidaying graduate.

SURVIVING PICASSO (15) Anthony Hopkins lets rip as the century's greatest artist and most reprehensible lover in a modernist Merchant Ivory.

A TIME TO KILL (15) Sandra Bullock and Samuel L Jackson emote for their lives in John Grisham's race thriller.

TIN CUP (15) Kevin Costner is *unusually appealing as a gifted but* self-destructive golfer.

TOUCH OF EVIL (12) Orson Welles's classic B-movie *noir*.

TRAINSPOTTING (18) Danny Boyle directs Welsh's blistering portrait of junkie camaraderie.

TRUE BLUE (15) Dull tale of the Oxford University boat-race mutiny.

THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES (U) The third part of Iranian director Kiarostami's slow-burning but affecting trilogy has villager Hossein landing a part in a film about a local earthquake and feeling a few romantic tremors of his own over his co-star.

TWELFTH NIGHT (U) Uncinematic adaptation by theatre director, Trevor Nunn.

TWO DAYS IN THE VALLEY (18) Slick, self-regarding comedy *noir* set in LA, with James Spader.

TWO MUCH (PG) Sloppy, inconsequential comedy with Melanie Griffith embarrassingly stilted as Daryl Hannah's sister, and Antonio Banderas as the duplicitous art dealer romancing them both.

THE UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG (PG) Catherine Deneuve discovers she's pregnant by her garage mechanic boyfriend in Jacques Demy's 1964 musical charmer. Freshly restored and re-released.

THE VAN (15) Final, least satisfying and most ingratiating of the adaptations of Doyle's Dublin trilogy.

WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY (15) *(subtitles)* A lost cat triggers this delicious tale of love, loneliness and community.

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS (PG) In the hands of director Terry Jones Grahame's pastoral classic becomes a clumsy fable about Thatcherism.

The eye

West End

101 Dalmatians (U)
Virgin Fulham Road Sat-Tue/Thu 1.20pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm (not Tue); Wed 2.30pm, 5.20pm, 8.20pm
Virgin Chelsea 12.20pm, 2.35pm, 4.55pm, 7.15pm, 9.35pm (not Tue/Wed)
Barbican 2.30pm (Sat), 3pm (not Sat), 6pm, 8.30pm
Screen on Baker Street 2.20pm, 4.35pm, 6.45pm, 8.55pm (not Tue)
UCI Whiteleys Sat-Wed 10.55am (not Wed), 11.50am (not Wed), 1.25pm, 2.10pm, 3.55pm, 4.35pm (not Wed), 6.15pm, 7pm (not Wed), 8.40pm (not Tue), 9.20pm (not Tue)
Swiss Cottage Odeon 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm (not Tue), 8.45pm (not Tue), 11.10pm (Sat)
Clapham Picture House 2pm (not Wed), 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm (not Tue)
Odeon Kensington 11.45am, 2.10pm, 4.40pm, 7.10pm, 9.40pm (not Tue), 12.10am (Sat)
Ritzy 11.15am (Sat/Mon/Tue), 1.30pm, 3.45pm, 6pm, 8.15pm (not Tue/Thu)
Odeon Leicester Square 12.45pm, 3.25pm, 6.05pm (not Tue), 8.45pm (not Tue)
Acts Of Love (18)
ABC Piccadilly (Formerly MGM) 1.30pm, 4pm, 6pm, 8.30pm (not Tue)
Warner West End Sat-Wed 5.10pm, 9.40pm (not Tue)
Antonia's Line (15)
ABC Swiss Centre 4pm, 8.50pm (not Tue)
L'Atalante (PG)
Ritzy Cinema Sun 2.30pm Zero De Conduite 3.50pm
Babe (U)
Ritzy Cinema Sat 10am
Beautiful Girls (15)
Odeon Kensington 4.20pm, 7pm, 9.40pm (not Tue), 12.20am (Sat)
Warner West End 2pm, 4.20pm, 6.50pm, 9.15pm (not Tue)
Le Bonheur Est Dans Le Pre (15)
Curzon Phoenix 1.30pm (not Sun), 3.45pm, 6.05pm, 8.20pm
Gate Notting Hill 4pm
ABC Swiss Centre 1.25pm, 3.40pm, 5.55pm, 8.30pm (not Tue)
Brassed Off (15)
ABC Tottenham Court Road 3.35pm, 9pm (not Tue)
Virgin Haymarket 1.40pm, 3.35pm, 5.55pm (Thu), 6.05pm (not Thu), 8.35pm (not Thu)
Odeon Mezzanine, Leicester Square 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm (not Tue), 8.20pm (not Tue)
Breaking The Waves (18)
ABC Shaftesbury Avenue 1.25pm, 4.30pm (not Thu), 7.45pm (not Tue/Thu)
A Chinese Ghost Story (NC)
Ritzy Cinema Sat 10.20pm; Mon 7.15pm
The Craft (15)
Warner West End Sat/Sun 12midnight
The Crow: City Of Angels (18)
Virgin Trocadero Sat 12midnight
Day Of The Beast (18)
Metro Sat-Mon/Thu 2.15pm, 4.30pm, 6.45pm, 9pm
Daylight (12)
ABC Tottenham Court Road 1.30pm, 4.05pm, 6.40pm, 9.15pm (not Tue)
Empire Leicester Sq 11.30am (not Wed), 2pm, 4.30pm, 7pm, 9pm (Thu), 9.30pm (not Tue/Thu), 12midnight (not Tue/Wed)
UCI Whiteleys Sat-Wed 11.10am, 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.45pm, 9.20pm (not Tue)
Virgin Trocadero Sat-Tue/Thu 12.45pm, 3.30pm, 6.15pm, 9pm (not Tue), 12midnight (Sat); Wed 1.45pm, 4.35pm, 7.25pm
ABC Baker Street 1.25pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm (not Tue)
Virgin Chelsea 1.15pm, 3.55pm, 6.45pm, 9.15pm (not Tue/Wed)
Swiss Cottage Odeon *1.10pm*, 3.40pm, 6.10pm (not Tue), 8.40pm (not Tue), 11.10pm (Sat)
The Day The Sun Turned Cold (Tianguo Niezi) (12)
ABC Swiss Centre 3.50pm, 8.50pm (not Tue)
Dragonheart (PG)
Plaza 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm
Ritzy Cinema Thu 10am
Emma (U)
Odeon Mezzanine, Leicester Sq 1.05pm, 3.35pm, 6.10pm (not Tue), 8.45pm (not Tue)
Evita (PG)
Odeon West End 12.15pm, 1.45pm, 3.15pm, 4.45pm, 6.15pm, 7.45pm (not Tue), 9.15pm (not Tue), 10.45pm (not Tue), 12.15am (Sat-Mon), 1.45am (Sat-Mon)
The Exorcist (18)
Virgin Trocadero Sat 12midnight
Fallen Angels (Duoluo Tianshi) (18)
Ritzy Cinema Tue/Wed 3.25pm, 7pm-Chungking Express 5.10pm
The Fan (15)
Odeon *Mezzanine, Leicester Square* Sat-Mon/Wed/Thu 8.20pm
Fargo (18)
ABC Panton Street 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.25pm, 8.50pm (not Tue)
The First Wives Club (PG)
Virgin Trocadero Sat-Tue/Thu 12.05pm, 2.25pm, 4.40pm, 7pm, 9.20pm (not Tue), 12midnight (Sat); Wed 12.45pm, 2.55pm, 5.05pm, 7.30pm
Virgin Fulham Road Sat-Tue/Thu 1.40pm, 4pm, 6.40pm, 9.15pm (not Tue); Wed 2.30pm, 5.30pm, 8.30pm
Odeon Kensington *Sat-Mon/Wed/Thu* 9.45pm, 12.15am (Sat)
Empire Leicester Square 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.45pm (not Tue), 11.30pm (Sat)
The Glimmer Man (18)
Warner West End Sat/Sun 11.50pm
A Goofy Movie (U)
Odeon Kensington 1.45pm
Ritzy Cinema Tue 10am
Independence Day (12)
Swiss Cottage Odeon *Sat 11pm*
Odeon Mezzanine, Leicester Sq 2.40pm, 5.30pm (not Tue), 8.25pm (not Tue)
Virgin Trocadero Sat-Wed 12.05pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.45pm (Sat-Mon), 11.45pm (Sat); Thu 12.05pm
Warner West End 2.20pm, 5.30pm, 8.50pm (not Tue), 12midnight (Sat/Sun)
I Shot Andy Warhol (18)
Virgin Haymarket 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
It Came From Outer Space (PG)
Ritzy Cinema Sat 10am
Jack (PG)
Ritzy Cinema Tue 10am
Jacquot de Nantes (PG)
Screen on the Hill Wed 5pm
James And The Giant Peach (U)
ABC Tottenham Court Road 1.45pm
Jingle All The Way (PG)
Plaza 2.20pm, 4.25pm, 6.30pm, 8.40pm (not Tue), 11.30pm (Sat)
Swiss Cottage Odeon 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.05pm (not Tue)
Virgin Trocadero Sat-Tue/Thu 12.10pm, 2.20pm, 4.30pm, 6.40pm, 9pm (not Tue); Wed 12.40pm, 2.45pm, 4.50pm, 7.10pm
UCI Whiteleys Sat-Wed 11.30am (not Wed), 1.55pm, 4.20pm, 6.30pm, 8.55pm (not Tue)
Warner West End 1pm (not Wed), 3.10pm, 5.10pm, 7.10pm, 9.20pm (not Tue), 11.30pm (Sat/Sun)
Odeon Kensington 12.10pm, 2.25pm, 4.40pm, 7.25pm
Odeon Mezzanine, Leicester Square 2.10pm, 4.10pm, 6.10pm (not Tue)
Virgin Chelsea 1pm, 3.10pm, 5.15pm, 7.20pm
Jude (15)
Odeon Mezzanine, Leicester Sq 3.10pm, 5.50pm (not Tue), 8.25pm (not Tue)
ABC Panton Street 1.15pm, 6pm

Kansas City (15)
Chelsea 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm
ABC Shaftesbury Avenue 2.40pm, 5.50pm, 8.30pm (not Tue)
Ritzy Cinema 2.40pm (Sat/Mon), 4.50pm, 7pm (Sat/Sun)
Last Of The High Kings (15)
Odeon Kensington Sat 12.05am
ABC Tottenham Court Road 6.10pm
The Long Kiss Goodnight (18)
Warner West End 1.15pm (not Wed), 4pm, 6.30pm, 9.30pm (not Tue), 12.15am (Sat/Sun)
Odeon Haymarket 2pm, 6pm (not Tue), 8.40pm (not Tue)
Virgin Trocadero Sat-Tue/Thu 12.20pm, 3.05pm, 6pm, 8.50pm (not Tue), 12midnight (Sat); Wed 1.40pm, 4.40pm, 7.25pm
Ritzy Cinema 3.50pm, 9.10pm (not Tue/Wed), 11.40pm (Sat)
Swiss Cottage Odeon Sat-Wed 8.25pm, 11.05pm (Sat)
Odeon Kensington Sat-Wed 3.50pm, 6.40pm, 9.30pm (not Tue), 12.25am (Sat); Thu 9.30pm
Gate Notting Hill 1.30pm, 9pm (not Tue), 11.30pm (Sat)
Virgin Chelsea Sat-Mon/Thu 9.20pm
Lone Star (15)
ABC Piccadilly (Formerly MGM) 2pm, 5.10pm, 8pm (not Tue)
Roald Dahl's Matilda (PG)
Virgin Trocadero Sat-Tue/Thu 12.05pm, 2.15pm, 4.20pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm (not Tue); Wed 12.35pm, 2.25pm, 5pm, 7.20pm
Warner West End 12.20pm (not Wed), 2.40pm, 4.50pm, 7pm, 9.10pm (not Tue), 11.30pm (Sat/Sun)
Odeon Kensington 2.05pm, 4.35pm, 7.05pm, 9.35pm (not Tue/Thu)
Virgin Chelsea 12.30pm, 2.40pm, 4.50pm, 7.05pm, 9.25pm (not Tue/Wed)
Clapham Picture House 2.15pm (not Wed), 4.30pm, 6.45pm, 9pm (not Tue)
UCI Whiteleys Sat-Wed 11.20am, 1.45pm, 4.05pm, 6.40pm, 9pm (not Tue)
Swiss Cottage Odeon 1.25pm, 4pm, 6.30pm (not Tue), 8.50pm (not Tue)
Ritzy Cinema 11.50am (not Sun/Wed), 1.55pm, 4pm, 6.05pm, 8.05pm (not Tue)
Michael Collins (15)
Virgin Fulham Road Mon/Tue/Thu 2.30pm, 6pm (not Thu), 8.50pm (Mon); Sat/Sun 12.20pm, 3.10pm, 6pm, 8.50pm; Wed 2pm, 5pm, 8pm
Warner West End 12.15pm (not Wed), 2.50pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm (not Tue), 11.20pm (Sat/Sun)
Mission: Impossible (PG)
Plaza Sat-Mon/Wed/Thu 8.40pm, 11.25pm (Sat)
The Nutty Professor (12)
Plaza 1.50pm, 4.05pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm (not Tue), *11.45pm (Sat)*
One False Move (18)
Ritzy Cinema Thu 2pm, 7.20pm
The Pillow Book (18)
Lumiere 12.50pm, 3.25pm, 6pm, 8.35pm (not Tue)
Gate Notting Hill 6.25pm
Il Postino (15)
ABC Swiss Centre 1.25pm, 6.10pm
Secrets And Lies (15)
ABC Panton St 2pm, 5pm, 8pm (not Tue)
Sleepers (15)
Virgin Trocadero Thu 5.45pm, 8.45pm
Ritzy Cinema Thu 8.30pm
Virgin Haymarket Thu 8.10pm
Swiss Cottage Odeon Thu 8.05pm
Virgin Fulham Road Thu 6pm, 9pm
Warner West End Thu 6.30pm, 9.15pm
Odeon Kensington Thu 4.45pm, 9pm
Star Trek: First Contact (12)
Ritzy 11.40am (Mon/Thu), 2pm, 4.20pm, 6.40pm, 9pm (not Tue), 11.15pm (Sat)
Empire Leicester Square 10.45am (not Wed/Thu), 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.45pm (not Tue), 11.30pm (Sat)
Plaza 1.35pm, 4.05pm, 6.35pm, 9.10pm (not Tue), 11.50pm (Sat)
UCI Whiteleys Sat-Wed 11.05am (not Wed), 2pm, 4.40pm, 7.10pm, 9.25pm (not Tue)
Virgin Fulham Road Sat-Tue/Thu 1pm, 3.50pm, 6.45pm, 9.20pm (not Tue); Wed 2.10pm, 5.10pm, 8.10pm
ABC Baker Street 1.30pm, 3.50pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm (not Tue)
Empire Leicester Square 10.45am (not Wed/Thu), 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.45 (not Tue), 11.30pm (Sat)
Swiss Cottage Odeon 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm (not Tue), 8.40pm (not Tue), 11.05pm (Sat)
Notting Hill Coronet 1.30pm (not Sun), 3.55pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm
Clapham Picture House 4.45pm, 9.15pm (not Tue)
ABC Tottenham Court Road 1.35pm, *4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.25pm (not Tue)*
Virgin Trocadero Sat-Tue/Thu 1pm, 3.45pm, 6.30pm, 9.10pm (not Tue), 12.10am (Sat); Wed 2.10pm, 4.50pm, 7.30pm
Screen on the Green 3.30pm, 6.20pm, 8.40pm (not Tue)
Odeon Kensington 1.30pm, 4.10pm, 6.50pm, 9.30pm (not Tue), 12.10am (Sat)
Stealing Beauty (15)
ABC Panton Street 3.40pm, 8.20pm (not Tue)
Surviving Picasso (15)
Renoir 12.50pm, 3.25pm, 6pm, 8.35pm
UCI Whiteleys Sat-Wed 1pm, 3.40pm, 6.25pm, 9.10pm (Sat-Mon)
Virgin Fulham Road Sat-Tue/Thu 12.30pm, 3.20pm, 6.10pm, 9pm (not Tue); Wed 1.50pm, 4.50pm, 7.50pm
The Minema Sat-Mon/Thu 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
Swiss Cottage Odeon 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm (not Tue), 8.30pm (not Tue), 11pm (Sat)
Virgin Haymarket 2.15pm, 5.10pm, 8.05pm
Screen on Baker Street 3pm, 5.55pm, 8.30pm (not Tue)
Ritzy Cinema 1.10pm (not Wed), 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.45pm (not Tue), 11.25pm (Sat)
Warner West End 12.40pm (not Wed), 3.15pm, 5.50pm, 8.40pm (not Tue), 11.40pm (Sat/Sun)
Through The Olive Trees (U)
Renoir 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm
Metro Sat-Mon/Thu 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm
A Time To Kill (15)
Warner West End 12noon (not Wed), 3pm, 6pm, 9pm (not Tue), 12.05am (Sat/Sun)
Twelfth Night (U)
ABC Swiss Centre 1.15pm, 6.10pm
The Umbrellas Of Cherbourg (PG)
Richmond Filmhouse 3pm, 5.30pm, 8pm
Barbican Cinema 3pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm
Curzon Mayfair 1.45pm (not Sun), 4pm, 6.15pm, 8.30pm
Screen on the Hill Sat-Tue/Thu 3pm, 5pm, 7.05pm, 9.05pm (not Tue); Wed 2.55pm, 7.15pm, 9.05pm
The Van (15)
ABC Panton Street 1.15pm, 3.30pm, 5.45pm, 8.15pm (not Tue)
Warner West End 12.25pm (not Wed), 2.30pm, 7.30pm (not Tue/Thu)
When The Cat's Away (15)
Clapham Picture House 2.30pm (not Wed), 7.15pm
ABC Swiss Centre 1.40pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.30pm (not Tue)
The Wind In The Willows (U)
Odeon Kensington 2.15pm
Ritzy Cinema Thu 10am
Withnail & I (15)
Curzon West End 1.40pm (not Sun), 3.55pm, 6.15pm, 8.35pm

London reps

EVERYMAN

Hollybush Lane, NW3 (0171-435 1525) Saturday 28 **Angels And Insects** (18) 2.20pm, 6.45pm + **Emma** (U) 4.25pm, 8.50pm
Sunday 29 **Cronaca Di Un Amore (Story Of A Love Affair)** (15) 1.05pm **L'Avventura** (PG) 2.50pm **Fargo** (18) 5.25pm, 9.15pm **The Usual Suspects** (18) 7.20pm
Monday 30 **Day for Night** (PG) 2.20pm, 8.50pm + **The Last Metro** (12) 4.35pm + **Jules Et Jim** (PG) 6.55pm
Tuesday 31 **Les Enfants Du Paradis** (PG) 1.15pm, 6.30pm + **The Beauty and the Beast** (PG) 4.45pm
Wednesday 1 **Smoke** *(15) 5.10pm*, 9pm + **Blue in the Face** (15) 7.20pm **Delicatessen** (15) 1pm + **Diva** (15) 2.50pm
Thursday 2 **Alphaville** (PG) 1.30pm, 7pm + **Pierrot Le Fou** (15) 3.20pm, 8.50pm + **Une Femme est une Femme** (18) 5.30pm
Friday 3 **Heat** (15) 2pm, 7.25pm + **Flesh** 3.45pm, 9.10pm + **Women in Revolt** 5.35pm

ICA CINEMA

The Mall, SW1 (0171-930 3647)
Thursday 2 **Gabbeh** Thu, Fri 5pm, 7pm, 9pm **Patrick Keiller Shorts** Thu, Fri 6.30pm, 8.30pm

NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

South Bank SE1 (0171-633 0274/cc 928 3232)
Saturday 28 August (PG) 4pm **In Search of the Castaways** (U) 4.10pm **Stargate** (PG) 5.50pm **Mixed Delights 3: Wodehouse Season** 6.15pm **The Perez Family** (15) 7.30pm **Independence Day** (12) 8.15pm **Young at Heart** *(1954)* 8.30pm
Sunday 29 **Independence Day** (12) 3.40pm **In Search of the Castaways** (U) 4pm **Holiday Inn** (U) 6.15pm **Germany, Pale Mother** (15) 6.30pm **Little Women** (U) 7.30pm **The Perez Family** (15) 8.30pm **The Silence Of The Lambs** (18) 8.45pm
Monday 30 **August** (PG) 2.30pm, 6.30pm **The Girl on the Boat** 6pm **The Perez Family** (15) 8.40pm **Anchoress** (12) 8.45pm
Tuesday 31 **August** (PG) 4pm **Little Women** (U) 4.15pm
Wednesday 1 **The Secret Of Roan Inish** (U) 4pm **Dr No** (PG) 4.10pm **Serpico** (18) 6pm **From Russia With Love** (PG) 6.20pm **August** (PG) 7.30pm **She's Gotta Have It** (18) 8.30pm **Goldfinger** (PG) 8.45pm Thursday 2 **August** (PG) 2.30pm **Thunderball** (PG) 6.10pm **Roger and Me** (15) 6.15pm **8 1/2** (15) 7.30pm **Without Love** 8.30pm **Clerks** (18) 8.45pm
Friday 3 **Sea of Love** (18) 2.30pm **The German Sisters** (15) 6.15pm **The Typewriter, The Rifle and The Movie Camera** 6.20pm **Marnie** 7.30pm **Park Row** 7.40pm **Dog Day Afternoon** 8.30pm **The Steel Helmet** 9.20pm

PHOENIX CINEMA

High Road, N2 (0181-444 6789)
Saturday 28 **Il Postino** (15) Sat 6.30pm; Sun 5.45pm **Breaking The Waves** (18) Sat 8.45pm; also Sun 8.10pm, Mon-Thu 5.25pm
Monday 30 **Lone Star** (15) 8.30pm, also Wed, Thu 8.30pm
Friday 3 **The Umbrellas Of Cherbourg** (PG) 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm

RIO CINEMA

Kingsland High Street, E8 (0171-254 6677)
Saturday 28 **The Wind In The Willows** (U) 11am **101 Dalmatians** (U) Sat-Tue, Wed, Thu 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm (not Tue) **The Godfather Part II** (18) 11.15pm
Friday 3 **Evita** (PG) 2.30pm, 5.30pm, 8.30pm

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS

Crisp Rd, W6 (0181-741 2255/0171-420 0100)
Saturday 28 **Notorious** (PG) 6.30pm + **Rebecca** (PG) 8.30pm
Sunday 29 **Red Desert** (15) 6pm + **L'Avventura** (PG) 8.20pm
Monday 30 **The Lady Vanishes** (PG) 6.45pm + **The 39 Steps** (PG) 8.45pm
Thursday 2 **The Big Sleep** (15) Thu/Fri 6.45pm + **Farewell My Lovely** (PG) 9pm

Regional reps

BRIGHTON

DUKE OF YORK'S (01273-626261/cc 602503)
Saturday 28 **Alaska** (PG) 11.30am **The Van** (15) Sat, Sun, Mon, Thu 3.30pm, 9pm; also Tue 3.30pm, Wed 9pm **Brassed Off** (15) Sat-Thu 6.45pm **James And The Giant Peach** (U) Sat 1.30pm; also Sun 11.30am, 1.30pm
Monday 30 **The Adventures Of Pinocchio** (U) Mon, Tue 11.30am, 1.30pm
Wednesday 1 **The Wind In The Willows** (U) Wed 3pm, 5pm; also Thu 11.30am, 1.30pm
Friday 3 **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (PG) Fri 2pm, 6.45pm **The Umbrellas Of Cherbourg** (PG) Fri 4.30pm, 9pm

BRISTOL

WATERSHED (0117-925 3845)
Saturday 28 **Emma** (U) Sat-Mon 3pm, 5.45pm; also Thu 3pm, 5.30pm **Michael Collins** (15) Sat-Mon, Thu 8.10pm **Kansas City** (15) Sat-Mon, Thu 8.20pm **Brassed Off** (15) Sat-Mon, Thu 3.05pm, 6pm
Friday 3 **Day Of The Beast** (18) 3pm, 6pm, 8.20pm **Beautiful Girls** (15) 6pm, 8.10pm

CAMBRIDGE

ARTS CINEMA (01223-572929)
Saturday 28 **The Nutcracker** (U) 11am **Kansas City** (15) Sat-Mon, Thu 4pm, 9pm; also Tue 4pm, Wed 9pm, Fri 2pm, 11.15pm **Twelfth Night** (U) Sat 6.30pm; also Sun-Tue, Thu 1.30pm; also Wed 4pm **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (PG) Sat 1.30pm; also Sun-Thu 6.30pm
Friday 3 **Kansas City** (15) 2pm, 11.15pm **Shine** (12) 4.30pm, 6.45pm, 9pm

CARDIFF

CHAPTER ARTS CENTRE (01222-399666)
Saturday 28 **Sunchaser** (15) Sat-Mon 7.30pm
Sunday 29 **Glengarry Glen Ross** (15) 5pm
Thursday 2 **Kansas City** (15) Thu-Fri 8.40pm **Il Postino** (15) Thu-Fri 6.15pm **Gabbeh** Thu 2.30pm, 7.30pm; Fri 7.30pm

IPSWICH

IPSWICH FILM THEATRE (01473-215544)
Saturday 28 **City Of Lost Children** (15) 6pm, 8.15pm **Stealing Beauty** (15) 6.15pm
Thursday 2 **The Wind In The Willows** (U) Thu-Fri 2.30pm, 6.15pm **Boston Kickout** (18) Thu/Fri 6pm **The Snapper** (15) Thu-Fri 8.15pm **Touch Of Evil** (12) Thu-Fri 8.30pm
Friday 3 **Boston Kickout** (18) 8.15pm **Touch Of Evil** (12) 8.30pm **The Wind In The Willows** (U) 2.30pm, 6.15pm **The Snapper** (15) 6pm

NORWICH

CINEMA CITY (01603-622047)
Saturday 28 **Secrets And Lies** (15) 5.30pm, 8.15pm **Twister** (PG) 2.30pm
Sunday 29 **The Crossing Guard** (18) 5pm **Milou en Mai** (15) 7.30pm
Monday 30 **Independence Day** (12) Mon, Tue 2.30pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm; also Wed 2.30pm, 5.45pm, Thu 5.45pm, Fri 2.30pm
Wednesday 1 **Stealing Beauty** (15) Wed 8.15pm; also Thu 2.30pm, 8.15pm, Fri 5.45pm, 8.15pm
Friday 3 **Chopper Chicks In Zombie Town** 11pm **Stealing Beauty** (15) 5.45pm, 8.15pm **Independence Day** (12) 2.30pm

PLYMOUTH

PLYMOUTH ARTS CENTRE (01752-660060)
Thursday 2 **Brassed Off** (15) Thu-Fri 8pm

London locals

ACTON

WARNER VILLAGE
(0181-896 0066) ⊖ Park Royal
101 Dalmatians 10.30am, 11am, 1pm, 1.50pm, 3.30pm, 4.20pm, 6pm, 6.50pm, 9.20pm, 9.50pm, 11.50pm (Sat)
Daylight 12.50pm, 3.40pm, 6.20pm, 9pm, 11.40pm (Sat)
First Wives Club Sat-Wed 7.20pm, 9.50pm
Jingle All The Way 11.10am, 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm
The Long Kiss Goodnight 1.10pm, 3.50pm, 7.05pm, 9.40pm
Roald Dahl's Matilda 10.50am, 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm
Sleepers Thu 6.05pm, 9.15pm
Star Trek: First Contact 11.30am, 12.40pm, 2pm, 3.20pm, 4.30pm, 7pm, 8.10pm, 8.40pm 9.30pm, 12midnight (Sat)

BROMLEY

ODEON (0181-315 4211) BR: Bromley North
101 Dalmatians Sat 11.35am, 2pm, 4.30pm, 7.05pm, 9.50pm; Sun-Thu 1pm, 3.35pm, 6.10pm (not Tue), 8.50pm (not Tue)
Jingle All The Way Sat 1.10pm, 3.20pm, 5.30pm; Sun-Thu 12.30pm (not Sun/Thu), 2.35pm, 4.35pm (not Thu), 6.40pm (not Tue/Thu)
The Long Kiss Goodnight Sat 7.35pm, 9.55pm; Sun-Thu 8.45pm (not Tue/Thu)
Roald Dahl's Matilda Sat 12.10pm, 2.35pm, 5.05pm, 7.30pm, 10pm; Sun-Thu 11.45am (not Sun/Tue), 2.05pm, 4.25pm, 6.45pm (not Tue), 8.45pm (not Tue)
Star Trek: First Contact Sat 11.50am, 2.25pm, 5pm, 7.25pm, 9.50pm; Sun-Thu 12.45pm, 3.25pm, 6.05pm (not Tue), 8.45pm (not Tue)

CROYDON

CLOCKTOWER (0181-253 1030) BR:Croydon West/East
Emma Sun 3pm
Roald Dahl's Matilda Sat-Tue/Thu 11am (not Sat), 1pm, 3pm (not Sun), 5pm, 7pm (not Tue)

EALING

ABC NORTHFIELDS AVE (0181-567 1075) BR/⊖ Ealing Broadway/⊖ Northfields
The Adventures Of Pinocchio 1.45pm, 4pm
First Wives Club 6.15pm, 8.45pm (not Tue)
The Hunchback Of Notre Dame Sat/Sun 1.45pm, 4pm

VIRGIN UXBRIDGE ROAD (0181-235 3003) BR/⊖ Ealing Broadway
101 Dalmatians Sat-Tue/Thu 11.50am, 2.10pm, 4.30pm, 6.45pm, 9pm (not Tue); Wed 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.15pm
Daylight Sat-Tue/Thu 1.15pm, 3.50pm, 6.30pm, 9.15pm (not Tue); Wed 1.45pm, 4.45pm, 7.45pm
Jingle All The Way Sat-Tue/Thu 12.30pm, 5pm; Wed 1.30pm, 6pm
Sleepers Thu 9pm
Star Trek: First Contact Sat-Tue/Thu 2.30pm, 7pm, 9.30pm (not Tue); Wed 3.30pm, 8pm

HARROW

WARNER (0181-427 9944) ⊖ Harrow on the Hill
101 Dalmatians 11.20am (not Wed), 12.25pm (not Wed), 1.20pm (not Wed), 2.45pm, 3.40pm, 5.05pm, 6pm, 7.20pm (not Tue), 8.30pm (not Tue), 9.40pm (not Tue), 11pm (Sat)
Daylight 12.40pm (not Tue), 3.15pm, 6.25pm, 9pm (not Tue), 11.35pm (not Tue)
The First Wives Club 7pm (not Thu), 9.20pm (not Tue/Thu), 11.50pm (Sat)
Jingle All The Way 1.10pm (not Wed), 3.30pm, 5.50pm, 8.40pm (not Tue), 11.20pm (Sat)
Long Kiss Goodnight 12.10pm (not Wed), 3pm, 6.50pm (not Thu), 9.30pm (not Tue/Thu)
Roald Dahl's Matilda 11.30am (not Wed), 1.45pm (not Wed), 4pm, 6.15pm, 8.50pm (not Tue), 11.10pm (Sat)
Sleepers Thu 7pm, 9.55pm
Star Trek: First Contact 11.20am (not Wed), 1.30pm (not Wed), 2pm, 4.10pm, 4.30pm, 6.40pm, 7.10pm, 9.10pm, 9.50pm (not Tue), 11.45pm (Sat)

ILFORD

ODEON (0181-315 4223) ⊖ Gants Hill
101 Dalmatians Sat 12.50pm, 3.20pm, 6.20pm, 8.50pm; Sun-Wed 1.20pm, 3.50pm, 6.20pm (not Tue), 8.50pm (not Tue); Thu 12.10pm, 2.50pm, 5.20pm, 8.50pm
The Adventures Of Pinocchio Sat 11.30am
Daylight Sat 1.20pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm; Sun-Thu 12.40pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm (not Tue), 8.40pm (not Tue)
Dragonheart Sat 11.40am
Jingle All The Way Sat-Thu 1pm, 3.40pm, 5.50pm (not Tue)
The Long Kiss Goodnight Sat-Wed 8.20pm
Roald Dahl's Matilda 12.20pm, 3.10pm, 5.40pm (not Tue), 8.10pm (not Tue)
Sleepers Thu 7.40pm
Star Trek: First Contact Sat 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.15pm; Sun-Thu 12.30pm, 3pm, 6pm (not Tue), 8.30pm (not Tue)

KINGSTON

OPTIONS (0181-546 0404) BR Kingston
101 Dalmatians 1.15pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm (not Tue)
Daylight 2.15pm, 5.35pm, 8.15pm (not Tue)
Jingle All The Way 1.25pm, 6.10pm
Star Trek: First Contact 3.35pm, 8.20pm (not Tue)

RICHMOND

ODEON (0181-315 4218) BR/⊖ Richmond
101 Dalmatians 1.15pm (Tue), 4pm (Tue), 6.45pm (not Wed), 9.30pm (not Wed)
Daylight 1pm (Tue), 3.40pm (Tue), 6.20pm (not Wed), 9pm (not Wed)
Roald Dahl's Matilda 1.30pm (Tue), 3.50pm (Tue), 6.30pm (not Wed), 9.20pm (not Wed)
Sleepers Thu 9.15pm

ODEON STUDIO (0181-332 0055) ⊖ Richmond
101 Dalmatians 1pm (Tue), 3.30pm (Tue), 6.30pm (not Wed), 9.10pm (not Wed)
Brassed Off 9.15pm (not Wed)
Dragonheart Sat 11am
A Goofy Movie Sat 11am
The Hunchback Of Notre Dame Sat 11am
Jingle All The Way 2pm (Tue), 4.10pm (Tue), 7pm (not Wed)
Long Kiss Goodnight 1pm (Tue), 3.45pm (Tue), 6.25pm (not Wed), 9.10pm (not Wed)
Star Trek: First Contact 1pm (Tue), 3.45pm (Tue), 6.30pm, 9.10pm (not Wed)
The Wind In The Willows Sat 11am

ROMFORD

ABC (01708-743848) BR: Romford
101 Dalmatians Sat-Mon/Wed/Thu 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm; Tue 12.15pm, 2.35pm, 4.55pm
Daylight Sat-Mon/Wed/Thu 1pm, 3.25pm, 6pm, 8.30pm; Tue 11.55am, 2.20pm, 4.45pm
Jingle All The Way Sat-Mon/Wed/Thu 1.25pm, 6.20pm; Tue 12.25pm, 5.10pm
Star Trek: First Contact Sat-Mon/Wed/Thu 3.55pm, 8.20pm, Tue 2.45pm

ODEON LIBERTY 2 (01708-729040)
BR: Romford
101 Dalmatians 11.30am (not Wed), 12.45pm, 1.45pm, 3.15pm, 4.15pm, 5.40pm (not Tue), 6.40pm (not Tue), 8pm (not Tue), 9pm (not Tue)
Daylight Sat 1.30pm, 4.15pm, 7pm, 9pm; Sun-Thu 12.50pm, 3.25pm, 6pm (not Tue), 8.35pm *(not Tue)*
Dragonheart Sat 11.05am
The First Wives Club Sat 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 7.20pm, 9.40pm; Sun-Thu 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6pm (not Tue), 8.30pm (not Tue)
A Goofy Movie Sat 11.05am
Jack Sat 11.05am
Jingle All The Way 11.15am (not Wed), 1.20pm, 3.30pm, 6pm (not Tue), 8.40pm (not Tue)
The Long Kiss Goodnight Sat 1.20pm, 4pm, 6.45pm, 9.30pm; Sun-Thu 12.50pm, 3.20pm, 5.55pm (not Tue), 8.30pm (not Tue)
Roald Dahl's Matilda 11.15am (not Wed), 1.30pm, 3.50pm, 6.15pm (not Tue), 8.45pm (not Tue)
The Nutty Professor Sat 11.05am
The Santa Clause Sat 11.05am
Sleepers Thu 5.35pm, 8.20pm
Star Trek: First Contact Sat 1.30pm, 4.30pm, 7pm, 9.30pm; Sun-Thu 1pm, 3.35pm, 6.10pm (not Tue), 8.40pm (not Tue)

UXBRIDGE

ODEON
(01426-931395) ⊖ Uxbridge
101 Dalmatians 11.20am (not Wed), 1.30pm, 3.55pm, 6.25pm, 8.45pm (not Tue)
Roald Dahl's Matilda 11.40am (not Wed), 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.40pm, 8.50pm (not Tue)

Anthony Hopkins shows his versatility (and his tonsure) by impersonating the 20th century's greatest visual artist in 'Surviving Picasso'

Into Battle for a bit of English history

1066 and all that? Revisit the site of the famous encounter, suggests Simon Calder

You probably have your own personal agenda for New Year's Day, but perhaps you could entertain the following proposition. The Normans attacked at dawn – and to maximise the chance of encountering the battlefield in blissful isolation, so can you.

This 1 January, dozens of English Heritage properties will be opening to the public for the first time on a New Year's Day. A good question to pose is: why have they not been open on the bank holiday in the past? After all, in many parts of the world tourist attractions keep going 365 days a year. But this is England, where propriety dictates that most people stay behind closed doors. Perhaps it is the liberal influence of Europe, but this New Year the leash is being loosened a notch.

So how to make the most of the new freedom? Without wishing to be too prescriptive, I suggest you resolve to catch the first train of the day from Charing Cross to Battle in Sussex. The service leaves London at 8.10 on New Year's morning, and a day return will cost £12.90.

It is important to travel by train because you will be deposited at a folly. What looks like an austere Scots chapel schoolhouse, all formal granite, was installed when the railway carved through the South Downs 150 years ago.

With a pause for puff half-way up on the haul to the town of Battle itself, you should get to the front gate of the most significant site in English history.

Those gentle Sussex meadows that slide away towards the coast were once the killing fields. King Harold and his army, bedraggled and fatigued after the battle of Stamford Brook, sped south to confront the Normans who had landed at Hastings.

The rest, as they say, is English history: remember 14 October 1066, and all that?

English Heritage has attacked with imagination the problem of how best to present the site of the famous battle. An unobtrusive audio system guides you around the serene slopes with a succession of scenes.

Some of the actors sound worryingly like members of Eastbourne Rep, but the stories pierce the barrier of comprehension – you are taken to each part of the battlefield, and can interpret the conflict from both sides.

While you are trying to make sense of all this, the ghostly angles of Battle Abbey are bearing down from the north. William I sealed his victory by building the Benedictine Abbey of St Martin on the high ground where the Saxons were slaughtered.

You could continue the day by exploring other notable Saxon and Norman sites in Sussex, such as Worth Abbey and Holy Trinity Church in Bosham.

Or, alternatively, you could just settle down at Ye Olde King's Head (founded 1421), order a large Scotch and 20 Rothmans and do battle with those good resolutions.

Standing the test of time: Battle Abbey in Sussex, near to the site of the battle of Hastings

Five other New Year's Days out

Tintagel Castle (01840 770328): the location, clinging to the wild north coast of Cornwall, is even more impressive than the legends of King Arthur (said to have been born here) and Merlin – whose cave you can visit. Adults £2.50, children £1.30.

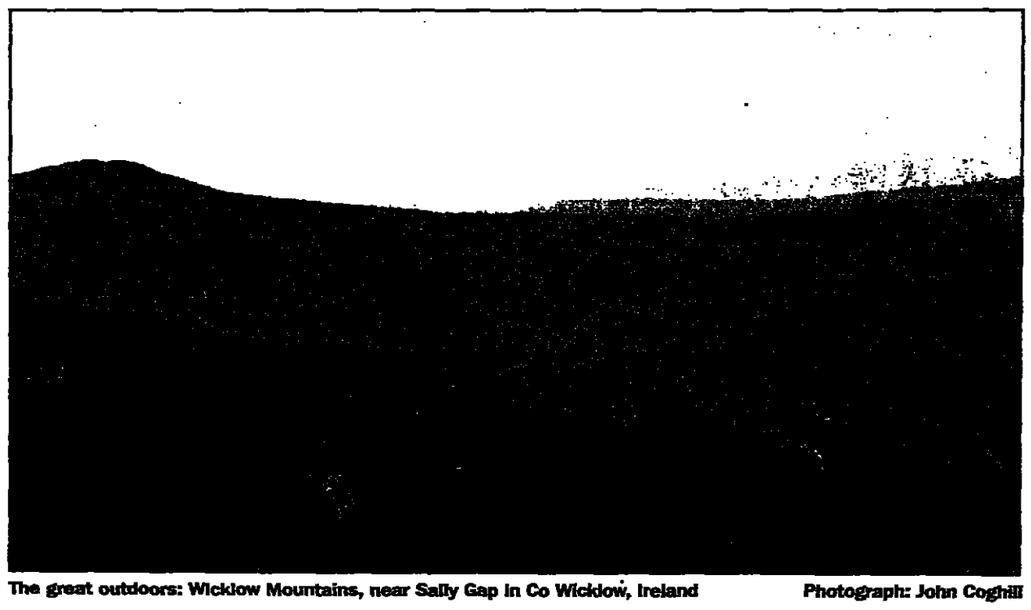
Carisbrooke Castle (01983 522107): the donkey that works the 18th-century treadmill at this 1,000-year-old site may get the day off on 1 Jan, but the rambling castle at the heart of the Isle of Wight is still great fun. Adults £3.80, children £1.90.

Kenilworth Castle (01926 852078): they don't make ruins like this any more. The Norman foundations and subsequent additions were well and truly trashed in the Civil War, and now comprise the best pile of old stones in the Midlands. Adults £2.50, children £1.30.

Goodrich Castle (01600 890538): in contrast to Kenilworth, this 12th-century red sandstone fortress is in excellent shape, and great fun for rummaging around. Adults £2.20, children £1.10.

Wroxeter Roman City (01743 761330): just outside Shrewsbury, this is the excavated remains of the fourth-largest Roman city in Britain. Adults £2.50, children £1.30.

Park the car and stride out into the fresh air



The great outdoors: Wicklow Mountains, near Sally Gap in Co Wicklow, Ireland Photograph: John Coghill

England

BEDFORDSHIRE
28 Dec: WOBURN, 10.30am, car park (opp. church), 8 mls, D. 01908 584348. 29 Dec: LUTON, 10am, Warden Hill Rd (off A6), 5½ mls 01582 584583. 30 Dec: WOBURN SANDS, 10.30am, Russell Street car park, 5-6 mls, D. 01582 743412 (d) or 01462 672906 (e). 31 Dec: BIGGLESWADE, 10.30am, Dan Albone car park, 4 mls, D. 01582 743412 (d) or 01462 672906 (e). 1 Jan: CLOPHILL, 11am, The Green, 4 mls, D 01525 860030. DUNSTABLE, 10am, car park adjacent to police station, 6 mls. HAYNES, 10.30am, Village Hall, 6 mls, D. 01582 743412 (d) or 01462 672906 (e).

BERKSHIRE
28 Dec: STRATLEY, 9.30am, NT car park at top of Stratley Hill, 11 mls 01635 42842. 29 Dec: WENTWORTH, 10.30am, Window Green Park car park (free parking off A30), 5 mls, D. 01344 772179 (e). 1 Jan: WOKINGHAM, 10am, car park east side of Denmark Street, 4 mls, 01189 787151. 29 Dec: HAMBLEDEN, 11.30am, village car park, 5 or 10 mls, D. 01628 484430. 1.30pm, village car park, 4 mls, D. 01494 534495. WENDOVER, 10.30am, library car park, High Street, 6 mls, D. 01296 27717. 1 Jan: AYLESBURY, 10.30am, railway station forecourt, 6 mls, D. 01296 27717. GREAT MISSENDEN, 11am, village car park, 7-8 mls, D. 01494 438565.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE
28 Dec: ABBOTTS RIPTON, 10am, Lane by church, opp. pub, 10 mls, D. 01480 463776. 29 Dec: GUILDEN MORDEN, 10am, church, 12 mls, D. 01763 243412 (d) or 01462 672906. CASTOR, 11am and 1.30pm, old railway station, 9 mls or 4.5 mls, D. 01733 320066 (e).

CHESHIRE
28 Dec: ACTON BRIDGE, 10am, parish hall car park, 5 or 10 mls, D. 2pm, parish hall car park, 8 mls, D. 01928 575726. CONGLETON EDGE, 1.30pm, Congleton library car park, 6 mls, 01606 832236 (e). POYNTON, 2.30pm, car park at top of Park House Rd, Higher Poynton, 5 mls, D. 01625 876089. 30 Dec: ASTON, 2pm, church, 5 mls, D. 01928 575726. CULCHETH, 10am, Pack Horse Inn, Church Lane, 5 or 10 mls, D. 01925 763512. 31 Dec: GREAT BARROW, 9.45am, roadside in Gt Barrow, 6 mls, 01244 810100 (e). HIGHER WHITLEY, 10am, Milestone Inn, Grimsditch Lane, west off A49, 5 or 10 mls, D. 01928 575726. HIGHER WHITLEY, 2pm, Milestone Inn, Grimsditch Lane, west off A49, 5 mls, D. 01928 575726. 1 Jan: DARESBURY, 2pm, church, 5 mls, D. 01928 575726. FRODSHAM, 10.30am, Beacon Hill car park, 10 mls, D. 01928 575726.

CORNWALL
28 Dec: LUDGVAN, 10.30am, Castle Gate, 8 mls, 01736 68282. 29 Dec: MEVAGISSEY, 12 noon, car park at end of quay, 5 mls, 01637 878707. ST IVES LELANT, 1.30pm, Halfertown Pub car park, 4½ mls, D 01736 752121. ST KEVERNE, 10.30am, village square, 10 mls, D 01326 240193. 30 Dec: FALMOUTH, 1.30pm, Constantine Village car park (by church), 4 mls, D. 01326 372462. 1 Jan: HAYLE/LELANT, 1.30pm, NT car park, Trencrom Hill, 5 or 2½ mls, D. 01736 752121. PENRYN/BUDOCK, 10.30am, Treverva lay-by, 10 mls, D. 01326 340728.

DERBYSHIRE
28 Dec: HATHERSAGE, 9.30am, Longshaw car park, Fox House, 8 mls, D. 0114 2783399 (e). MAYFIELD, 10.35am, Bus Station, 6 mls, D. 01663 732706. 29 Dec: ASTON UPON TRENT, 9.45am for 10am start, roadside near village, 9½ mls. MATLOCK, 10am, station car park, 10 mls, D. 01629 583893. MONYASH, 8½ mls, 01260 227428 (e). 30 Dec: BANFORD, 10am, Fairholmes Plantation, 8 mls. 0114 2783399 (e). LITTLE EATON, 11am, church, 6 mls, D. 0115 9392554. 1 Jan: CHROME HILL, 10 mls, 01625 426387 (e). OAKERTHORPE, 9.45am, Anchor Inn, 6 or 9 mls, D. OAKERTHORPE, 1.30pm, Anchor Inn, 3 mls, D. Contact as previous walk.

DEVON
29 Dec: TOTNES, 10.30am, The Plains, outside NT shop, 5½ mls, D 01803 210826 (d). CREDITON, 10am, Lord's Meadow, 8 mls, D. 01392 413073. TEIGNMOUTH, 9.30am, Lower Woodway Rd, 5 or 7 mls, 12 01803 292809. 1 Jan: SOUTH MOLTON, 11am, Hacche Lane, 612 mls, D. 01271 42303. TOTNES, 10am, Totnes Borough car park, 5½ mls, D. a 01803 865234.

DURHAM
1 Jan: WEST AUCKLAND, 11.45am, Royal Oak lay-by on A68, 9 miles north west of Darlington, 5½ mls, D. 01325 320168.

ESSEX
28 Dec: HADLEIGH, 10am, John Burrows Recreation Ground car park, 4 mls, D. 01702 552241. 29 Dec: THAXTED, 11am, town car park, 4 mls, D. 01621 828682. 31 Dec: HAINAULT, 10am to 12.30pm, Hainault Country Park, first car park, 5 mls. 0181 530 3020. 1 Jan: CHIGWELL ROW, 10.30am, car park opp. church, 8 mls. 0181 478 0747. 28 Dec: GREAT EASTON, 10.30am, Swan pub, 4 mls, 01708 509935.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE
28 Dec: WHITESHILL, 10am, The Woodcutters, 5 mls, 01242 674470. 29 Dec: SEVEN SPRINGS, 10am, The Hungry Horse (formerly 7 Springs Hotel), 8 mls, D. 01452 855909. 30 Dec: NORTHLEACH, 10am, Market Place, 5-6 mls, 01451 860864. 31 Dec: WOODCHESTER, 10am, A46 lay-by, South Woodchester, 5 mls, 01453 873625. 1 Jan: FAIRFORD, 10.15am, car park at north end of Fairford Market Place, 5 mls, 01285 862032 (e). SOUDLEY, 10.30am, Forest Enterprise car park, top end of Soudley Ponds, access off minor rd between Littledean and Soudley, 4½ mls, D. 01594 843389.

HAMPSHIRE
29 Dec: ALTON, 10.30am, Medstead village (roadside by church), 9 mls, D. 01483 417528 (e). SHAWFORD DOWN, 10.40am, car park, 6 mls, D. 01329 232027. 1 Jan: BROCKENHURST, 10am, central car park, 6 mls, D. 01703 266771. DIBDEN PURLIEU/BEAULIEU, 10.30am, Hilltop on B3054 (follow Exbury sign to Moorhills car park), 4½ mls, D. 01703 843285.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER
29 Dec: DUNSTALL CASTLE (FOLLY), 10am, nr Defford, Pershore, off A4104 on Croome Estate, 4½-5 mls, D. 01386 446538.

HERTFORDSHIRE
31 Dec: POTTEN END, 10am, village green, 5 mls, 01582 668824. 1 Jan: DIGSWELL, 10.30am, Welwyn North Station, 10½ mls, D. 0181 449 2139. ROYSTON, 10am, Heath Sports Centre car park, Thorfield Heath, Baldock Rd, 5 mls, D. 01763 242677.

ISLE OF WIGHT
28 Dec: CARISBROOKE, 10am, Castle, 5 mls, D. 01983 853704 or 01983 566726.

KENT
29 Dec: ASHURST, 10am, lay-by on south side of A264 just west of railway bridge, 5-6 mls, D. 01892 740330. 30 Dec: TONBRIDGE, 11am, Watergate, High Street (nr castle), 5-6 mls, D. 22 01732 366820. 1 Jan: BIGGIN HILL, 10am, Leaves Green car park, adjacent to Crown Pub, up to 10 mls, D. 22 01322 554259. FARNBOROUGH, 1pm, by George Hotel (there is no parking in hotel car park), 5 mls, D. WEST MALLING, 10.30am, car park behind Tesco, High Street, 4½ mls, D. 01732 842212.

LANCASHIRE
29 Dec: NELSON, 10.30am, Victoria Park car park, 5 mls, D. 01282 613721. 1 Jan: CHIPPING, 11am, main car park, 10 mls (incl. 500m climb up Fair Snape Fell), a 01772 312027. ORMSKIRK, 1.30pm, St Anne's Church, Prescot Rd, 5 mls, D. 01772 812034 (e).

LINCOLNSHIRE
1 Jan: SPALDING, 11am, Chatterton Water Tower, 4 mls, D.

LONDON AREA
28 Dec: CROYDON, 10.15am, Coulsdon South railway station, 13 or 6 mls, D. 0181 686 0636; 2pm, Rose & Crown, Godstone Rd, Kenley, 7 mls, D. 0181 686 0636. 30 Dec: HAMMERSMITH, 10.15am, Tube station, 7 mls. 0171 328 6724 (e). 1 Jan: HAVERING, 10.30am, Bedfords Park car park, 3 mls. 01708 509935.

MERSEYSIDE
28 Dec: THURSTASTON, 10-30am, visitor centre, Station Rd, 6 mls, D. 0151-608 9472. 1 Jan: FINDON VILLAGE, 1.30pm, near Gun Inn, 5 mls, D. 01273 452360.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
28 Dec: CRANFORD ST JOHN, 2pm, village green, 4½ mls, D. 01536 511162 (e). 29 Dec: DAVENTRY, Series of walks, all starting at Country Park, 9.15am, 13 mls; 9.45am, 10 mls; 10am, 5 mls. 1.30pm, 5 mls, D. 01933 460373 (e). POTTERSPURY, 10am, church graveyard, 10 mls, D. 01525 385288 (e). 1 Jan: BRACKLEY, 10am, town hall, 8 mls, D. WEEDON, 9.30am, recreation ground, 6 mls, D. 01604 755786 (e); 1.30pm, Plume and Feathers pub, 5 mls, D. 01604 755786(e).

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
29 Dec: HARBY, 10am, Nag's Head Inn car park, 5-6 mls. 01476 565090. LAMBLEY, 10.30am, by Nags Head pub, Main St/Spring Lane, 9 mls, D. 0115 9821022 (e). LOWDHAM, 10.30am, primary school, Main Street, 7½ mls, D. 01949 842141. 1 Jan: COTGRAVE, 11am, Macklevs Bridge, 1 ml north of Kinoulton, 7 mls, D. 0115 977 2161 (d).

OXFORDSHIRE
28 Dec: WOODSTOCK, 10am, The Museum, High Street, 6 mls, D. 01608 642360. 31 Dec: CHILDREY, 10am, church, 8 mls, D. 01235 751280. 1 Jan: IPSDEN, 10am, Homer Farm (park in house drive), nr Wellingford, 8 mls, D. 01491 574065.

SHROPSHIRE
28 Dec: CLEOBURY NORTH, 10am, Brown Clee picnic area, 10 mls, 01902 753201. 29 Dec: CHURCH STRETTON, 10am, car park, 10 mls, 01902 758947. WELLINGTON/TELFORD, 10am, Forest Glen, 4 mls, D. 01630 653433. 30 Dec: CRAVEN ARMS, 10.30am, on B4368 at turning to Seifton Batch, 8 mls, 01584 877375. THE WREKIN, 8 mls, 01543 423071 (e). 31 Dec: MUCH WENLOCK, 10am, NT car park, 8 mls, D. 01952 727617. 1 Jan: LLANYMYNECH, 10am, Dolphin Inn, canalside car park, 7½ mls, D. 01691 830011.

SOMERSET
28 Dec: MINEHEAD, disused quarry, Hill Rd, 10.30am, 4 mls or 8 mls; 1.30pm, 4 mls, 01643 703986. WELLS, 10.30am, Moat Bishop's Palace, 8 mls, 01749 670019. 29 Dec: BATH, 2pm, outside RSPCA Animal Centre, The Avenue, Claverton Down, 4 mls, D. 01225 333395. LUXBOROUGH, 10.30am, Village Hall car park, 8 mls, D. 01823 324185. SANDFORD, 10.30am, Brinsey Products car park, off A368 at Sandford, 8 mls 01934 820954. STREET, 10.30am, Ivythorn Hill car park, nr youth hostel, 8 mls, D. 01458 210500 (e). 31 Dec: NORTH CURRY, 10.30am, Rising Sun Inn car park, Lower Knapp, 4½ mls, D. 01823 442509. 1 Jan: BLUE ANCHOR, east end of front, 10.30am, 5 mls; 1.30pm, 4 mls. 01984 640277. CLEVEDON, 10am, Salthouse Fields car park, 5 mls, D. 01275 871236. MIDSOMER NORTON, 10.30am, Safeway car park, 4½ mls, D. 01761 412069.

STAFFORDSHIRE
28 Dec: ALTON, 9.30am, lay-by west of Great Gate, 10 mls. 01922 25862. NEWBOROUGH, 10am, Red Lion pub, 4½ mls, D. 01283 565201. 29 Dec: LICHFIELD, 10.30am, long-stay car park, friary, 6 mls. 01543 258439. 1 Jan: BOBBINGTON, 10.30am, West Park, opp. Summerfield Rd, 5 mls. 0902 755966. 5 Jan: LICHFIELD, 10.30am, long-stay car park, friary, 8 mls. 01543 258439.

SUFFOLK
29 Dec: BARHAM, 10.15am, Picnic centre, Pest House Lane, 5½mls, D. 01449 721121 (after 4pm). BURY ST EDMUNDS, 10am, Macebearer car park, Hardwick Lane, 10 mls. Dogs allowed at rear. 01284 768729. GT GLEMHAM, 10.30am, Old School, 5 mLS, D. 2201728 648481. WOODBRIDGE, 10.15am, Community Centre car park, Station Rd, 6½ mls, D. 01473 623431. 1 Jan: CULFORD, 10.30am, Culford School Sports Centre car park, 5-6 mls. Dogs are allowed at rear of walk. 01359 250815. NEEDHAM MARKET, 10.30am, service road east side of B1113 nr Badley Bridge, 4 mls, D. 01473 623431.

STAFFORDSHIRE
29 Dec: HEDNESFORD, 9.30 am, Kwik Save car park, 7 mls. 01889 586438 (e).

SURREY
28 Dec: EWHURST, 10am, Hartwood control car park 3, Fitch Hill (3 miles south of Shere), 5½ mls, D. 01483 300651 (e). SELSDON, car park next to library, 10am, 5 or 10 mls; 1.30pm, 5 mls. 0181-660 5733. 29 Dec: KESTON PONDS, 10am, car park, 10-12 mls. 0181 660 5733. 1 Jan: COMPTON, 2pm, village hall, 4 mls, D. 01483 427122. PIRBRIGHT, 10.30am, village green, 5 mls, D. 01252 657741.

WARWICKSHIRE
29 Dec: HALFORD, 10.15am, old river bridge, 10 mls, D. 01295 253289 (e). HENLEY IN ARDEN, 9.45am, Prince Harry Rd car park, 9 mls. 0121 748 3886. 30 Dec: STRATFORD UPON AVON, 1.30pm, Gower Memorial, Bancroft Gardens, 5 mls. 01789 298061.

WILTSHIRE
29 Dec: MERE, 10am, NT car park, Stourhead, 10 mls, D. 01225 753897. 1 Jan: BOX, 10am, Selwyn Hall car park, 9½ mls, D. 01225 761200.

YORKSHIRE
28 Dec: POPPLETON, 10am, war memorial, 9 mls, D. 01904 708479. 1 Jan: HEDON, 10am, Market Place, 8 mls, D. 01904 708479. HUGGATE, 10.15am, Fox Covert Farm, 12 mls, D. 01904 708479. 29 Dec: CAWOOD, 10.45am, car park, D. 01937 833574. EASINGWOLD, 10.15am, Birdforth lay-by A19, 12 mls, D. 01904 708479. MUKER, 10.30am, village car park, 8 mls, D. 01748 822845. THORNTON LE DALE, 10am, car park, 10 mls, D. 21 01904 708479. 29 Dec: BASLOW, 9.30am, main car park, 8 mls. 0114 2738339 (e). 31 Dec: HILLSBOROUGH, 9.30am, Malin Bridge tram stop, 8 mls. 0114 2738339 (e). 1 Jan: SWINTON, 10am, town centre car park, 12 mls, D. 22 01709 585389 (e). 28 Dec: OTLEY, 10m, Market Square clock, 8 mls, D. 0113 2402889 (e). 29 Dec: GARFORTH, 11.30, Crusader pub, Selby Rd (before Garforth Cliff travelling from Leeds city), 6 mls, D. 0113 2931358 (e). HEBDEN BRIDGE, 10.15am, Information Centre, 8 mls, D. 01422 823440. HONLEY, two walks starting from Gynn Lane, 10am, 4 or 8 mls. 12.45pm, 4 mls, D. ILKLEY, 10am, the old bridge, 9 mls. 0113 2689268. MIRFIELD, 11.30am, library car park, 5 mls, D. 01924 496442. RIPPONDEN, 10am, car park, Royd Lane, 6 mls, D. 22 01706 365404. 30 Dec: ILKLEY, 10.15am, railway station, 6 mls. 0113 2587861. 31 Dec: MENSTON, 10am, railway station, 5 mls. 0113 2587861. 1 Jan: LUDDENDEN FOOT, 10.30am, Station Rd, 9 mls, D. 01422 823440. PATELEY BRIDGE, 10.15am, main car park, Brimham Rocks, 8 mls, D. 01943 873197 (e).

Scotland

ANGUS
29 Dec: DUNDEE, 10.40am, Camperdown Park or 11am, Balhyacart, both on A923, 5 mls, D. 22 01382 641733 or 552813. 29 Dec: ABERLADY, 9am, Dalkeith Indoor Bowling Club car park, 8 mls. 0131 6540893; 0131 6639335 (e).

FIFE
28 Dec: SCOTLANDWELL, 10.30am, Well Country Inn, 3 mls. 01383 722843. 29 Dec: IRVINE, 10am, Eglinton Park visitors centre, 3-5 mls. 01292 315769 (e).

STRATHCLYDE
28 Dec: W KILBRIDE, 9.30am, Waterside Seamill, 7 mls. 01294 822158. BRIDGE OF ALLAN, 10.30am, Bridge over Allan Water, 12 mls. 0141 429 0893 (e).

WEST LOTHIAN
28 Dec: BRAID HILLS, 11am, Mortonhall Club House, Braid Road, 6 mls. 0131-445 3078. 31 Dec: EDINBURGH, 8.30am, Linlithgow Cross (walk incl climb of 800 ft), 8 mls.

Wales

28 Dec: LAMPETER, 1pm, Ram Inn, Cwmann, 5 mls, D. 01570 422566 (d). LLANDEILO, 10.30am, car park, 4½ mls, D. 01550 777623. NEWCASTLE EMLYN, 11am, market car park, 4-5 mls, D. 01239 711057. 1 Jan: BETWS-Y-COED, 11.30am, station car park, 5 mls, D. 01492 641587. 28 Dec: LLANBERIS, 10am, Oriel car park, 6 mls, D. 01248 810208. 29 Dec: BARMOUTH, 10.30am, Leisure Centre, station, 4½ mls. 01341 422367. 1 Jan: PONTSTICILL, 11am (or 10am from Ystrad Mynach), Red Cow car park, 4 mls, D. 01443 936257. 30 Dec: PONTNEDDFECHAN, 10.30am, quarry car park at Craig y Dinas, 7 mls, 01443 223470(e). 29 Dec: EFAIL ISAF, 9.30am, Llantrisant Leisure Centre, 11 mls, D. 01443 207689 (e). 1 Jan: WENVOE, 11am, Llantrisant Leisure Centre, 11 mls, D. 01443 207689 (e). 1 Jan: GOWER, 10am, w of Penmaen, Rose Cottage bus stop and car parking, 7 mls. Dogs allowed but no extending leads. 01792 367188. 30 Dec: nr Glyn Ceiriog, 10.30 am, Pont-y-Meibion, nr Pandy 01691 718771.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS
D. dogs are welcome, but must be kept on a lead
(d) daytime telephone number
(e) evening telephone number

New Year guide to theatre, clubs & events

Liese Spencer advises you to steer well clear of the Trafalgar Square scrum this New Year's Eve, and head for Edinburgh's Hogmanay Festival

While TV cameras zoom in on the heaving crowds in Trafalgar Square, everyone who knows what's what will be skipping that superannuated celebration and first footing it up north to celebrate a traditional Scottish Hogmanay. Although Glasgow has a fearsome reputation for all-night debauchery, this year, Edinburgh looks set to trump its rivals with a four-day festival of arts, music and sporting events which the city believes will be the biggest New Year celebration in the world. Revellers can choose between a welter of entertainment which includes rock concerts in the shadow of the great castle, intimate candle-lit classical concerts and international street theatre. As the list below illustrates, there's something for everyone. Pick your personality for 1997 or compile an identi-kit partygoing profile:

THE JAZZER
Jazz on Hogmanay: Get hep to the sounds of Suzanne Bonnar, Fionna Duncan and Carol Kidd, performing a giddy mix of swing, blues and gospel. *Queen's Hall, 31 Dec 7.30pm*

THE CLUBBER: Children of the Albion Rovers Club Nite Readings and ravings from clubber and author Irvine Welsh, along with banging dance from DJs from Lift, Manga and The Brix. *Traverse Theatre, Cambridge St, Mon 30 9.30pm-3.30am £10*

World Party – Celebrate global dance culture with live acts and DJs from all over the world. *Meadowbank Stadium, 31 Dec 8pm-late £22.50.*
After sweating it out on the dancefloor, check out the **inflatable, illuminated air palace** in Princes St.

THE ROCKER:
At the Hogmanay Street Party on New Year's Eve itself, rockers and popsters alike will find something to sing in the New Year. On the **Radio One Stage** (Castle St, 9.30pm-1.30pm) unplug your lugs to Mary Kiani and Burger Queen, or shimmy down to **Forth FM's Stage** (The Mound, 10.15pm-late) for Manchester four-piece The Space Monkeys, the unbearably hip Baby Bird, Stereophonics and retro faves Ocean Colour Scene.

THE PYROMANIAC: The Torchlit Procession is a *spectacular start to Hogmanay, with a procession of flames, led by a huge longboat, held aloft by* men in kilts. Torches can be bought from the High Street and Mound Square. The flaming event leaves Parliament Square at 5.30pm on 29 Dec and *proceeds to Calton Hill for the* **Fire Festival** (6pm) which *features a pageant by performance group Te Pooka.* The climax is **fireworks at midnight** in Princes St Gardens.

No matter if you're a pyromaniac or a New Ager, there's something for everyone at the Hogmanay Festival

THE AESTHETE:
Scottish Food Fair: Gourmands can watch demonstrations of Scottish cooking and sample the delicious results. *Assembly Rooms, 54 George St Sat 28-Mon 30 10am-6pm*
Candlelit Concert In The Cathedral The choir of St Giles and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Brass Ensemble perform works by *Handel, Taverner* and Poulenc in the atmospheric environs of this medieval church. *St Giles Cathedral, High St, Mon 30 7.30pm-9pm*
First Light Sneak an early preview of Edinburgh's rare collection of Turner's watercolours. *National Gallery of Scotland, 1 Jan 12-5pm*

THE NEW AGER: Find out what the new year holds in store for you at **Futurama**, a psychic gathering of Mystic Megs. Along with the sooth-sayers *there's also an environmental* sculpture called the Resolution Tree. *Riddles Court, Royal Mile Sat 28-31 11am-6pm*

OUTDOOR TYPES:
The Hogmanay Games stretch over two days and feature the ancient New Year Sprint, and the first Edinburgh vs Glasgow Tug O'War. *Mon 30, Tue 31 Meadowbank Stadium 11am-4pm £3*
Information Line: 0891-33 1997

Children

LONDON

BARBICAN HALL The Mad Hatter's Christmas Concert London Concert Orchestra presents seasonal music, special stories and a slew of surprises for children and families. Barbican Centre EC2 (0171-638 8891) ⊖ Moorgate/Barbican. 28 Dec, 3.30pm, £9.80.

BARBICAN HALL Family Classical Gala Classical family from the London Concert Orchestra. Ages six and up. Barbican Centre EC2 (0171-638 8891) ⊖ Moorgate/Barbican. 30 Dec, 3pm, £9.50-£26.50, under 16's £4.75-£13.25.

HAYWARD GALLERY **It Can't Be True!** Explore the paintings of Howard Hodgkins with celebrated writers who *make instant texts from kids' responses.* Ages 7-12 with adult. Belvedere Road SE1 (0171-960 4242) BR/⊖ Waterloo. 28-29 Dec, 4-5 Jan, *11.30am, £5, child £1,* booking essential.

LITTLE ANGEL MARIONETTE THEATRE The Sleeping Beauty Little Angel marionettes revive the classic production, featuring spinet music based on Tchaikovsky's score. Dagmar Passage, Cross St N1 (0171-226 1787) ⊖ Highbury & Islington/Angel. Sat-Sun & 3 Jan, 11am (ages 3 & up) & 3pm (ages 5 & up), ends 26 Jan, £6.50, concs/child £5.

LYRIC HAMMERSMITH The Roly Poly Pudding Intimate puppet show presented by Oily Cart Theatre Company. Ages two to five. King Street W6 (0181-741 2311) ⊖ Hammersmith. Mon-Fri (from Dec 30 (except 1 Jan), 11am & 2pm, Sat 11am & 1pm, ends 4 Jan, £4.

OLD ROYAL OBSERVATORY Christmas Planetarium Show: Stars of Winter Resident Planetarium Lecturer Harry Ford describes the Christmas skies for children six *and above. Greenwich Park SE10 (0181-858 4422/312 6565)* BR: Maze Hill. 28 Dec, 2pm & 3pm, 30-31 Dec, 2.30pm, *£1.50, child £1.*

PURCELL ROOM David Wood Magic & Music Show BBC TV star presents a family show full of fun, and audience participation. For families and children ages three and up. 29 Dec, 3pm, 30-31 Dec, 11am and 3pm, £6, child £4.50, family ticket £17.50.

The Lord Of Misrule: A Medieval Christmas Celebration Sirinu plays ancient and medieval instruments, with dancing. For all the family. 29 Dec, 7.30pm, £6-£9, concs £5-£8, family ticket available.
The Hotchpotch Pantomime: An 18th Century Seasonal Pantomime Singing, dancing, grotesque and magical effects, and music combine in popular 1710s panto.
South Bank SE1 (0171-960 4242) ⊖ Waterloo. 1 Jan, 7.30pm, £6-£9, concs £2.50

ROYAL ALBERT HALL Saltimbanco Legendary *Cirque Du Soleil returns with box-office breaking show for festive season.* Dazzling show for everyone. Kensington Gore SW7 (0171-589 8212) ⊖ High St Kensington. From 2 Jan, Tue-Sun 7.45pm, mats Sat-Sun 2.30pm, ends 19 Jan, £23.50-£40.

VAUDEVILLE THEATRE The Witches Theatrical adaptation of Roald Dahl's story directed by David Wood for children and adults alike. Strand WC2 (0171-836 9987) ⊖ Charing Cross. Mon-Sat 7pm, mats Tue-Fri 2pm, Sat 11am & 2pm (extra mat 31 Dec, 11am & 2pm), £9.50-£18, child £6.50-£12.

Regional

CAMBRIDGE

LECTURE THEATRE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING
What Made The Cows Mad? Lecture for 11-19 year olds on the causes of BSE, by Dr Rosalind Ridley. 2 Jan, 2.30pm. No tickets needed.
A Friend To Slaves Lecture for 11-19 year olds on the history of the British slave trade. 2 Jan, 10.30am. No tickets needed.
Castles Lecture Lecture on the history of English castles, by Dr Ronald Gray, Fellow *of Emmanuel College. For children aged 11-19.* 3 Jan, 2.30pm, no tickets needed.
Antarctica & The Martian Connection Lecture for 11-19 year olds by David Wynn-Williams.
Trumpington Street, 3 Jan, 10.30am

EXETER

ROYAL ALBERT MEMORIAL MUSEUM Poetry from the Underground Workshop for 8-14 year olds with popular poet Colin McFarlane, with a special tour of Exeter's ancient underground passages. Bring a packed lunch. 30 Dec, 10.30am-3.30pm, £6.50
Time Detectives Workshop for 7-12 year olds on history and archaeology with Gerald the Giraffe and Gary Marshall. Queen Street (01392-265858) 2 Jan, 10.30am-12.30pm. £3.

OXFORD

OLD FIRE STATION THEATRE **Princess Forget-Me-Not and the Strange Planet Immobilon** Colourful fairy-tale show for children aged five and up, with music and magic. George Street (01865-794494) 28-30 Dec, 2.30pm & 6.30pm, £6.50, concs £4.50.

Events

LONDON

EARLS COURT EXHIBITION CENTRE London International Boat Show 1997 The very latest in all things nautical with over 800 exhibitors. Warwick Rd SW5 (0171-390 1871) ⊖ Earls Ct. From 3 Jan, daily 10am-7pm (except 9 Jan, 10am-9.30pm, 12 Jan, 10am-6pm), ends 12 Jan, £8.50, concs £6.50, 2 under 16's free with each adult ticket.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM Sir Joseph Banks: The Greening Of The Empire The discoveries of a naturalist who sailed the seas with Capt Cook. Cromwell Road SW7 (0171-938 9123) ⊖ South Kensington. Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 11am-5.50pm, ends 23 Feb, £5.50, concs £3, child £2.80, under 5's free, family ticket £15.

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM Among The Green Boughs: Concert Seasonal 17th century music played by costumed musicians. Romney Road SE10 (0181-858 4422) BR: Greenwich/Maze Hill. 28-31 Dec, 11.30am-4pm, £5.50, concs £4.50, child £3, family ticket £16.

OLYMPIA International Model Show Cars, boats & action figures plus Model Engineer Exhibition. Hammersmith Road W14 (01442-244 321) ⊖ Earls Court. 29 Dec-4 Jan, 10am-6pm (3 Jan, 10am-8pm), £7.50, concs £5.50, under 16s £4, family ticket £20

PURCELL ROOM Cornemusique: Extraordinary Story Of The Bagpipes Of France Journey from 1140 to 1996 with music and stories. South Bank SE1 (0171-960 4242) ⊖ Waterloo. 2 Jan, 7.30pm, £6-£9.

ROUNDHOUSE Chinese State Circus Spectacular acrobatic event. Chalk Farm Road NW1 (0171-482 7318/420 0000) ⊖ Chalk Farm. Tue-Sat & Dec 30, 8pm (except 31 Dec), mats Sat & Sun & 30 Dec, 1-3 Jan, 2.30pm, Sun 5.30pm, ends 26 Jan, £9-£18.50, concs £6-£15.50

Theatre

WEST END

Art
Tom Courtenay and Albert Finney in Yasmina Reza's drama about art and friendship. Wyndham's Theatre Charing Cross Road WC2 (0171-369 1736/cc 867 1111) ⊖ Leicester Square. Tue-Sat 8pm, mats Wed 3pm, Sat & Sun 5pm (31 Dec, 5pm only), £9.50-£25. 90 mins.

As You Like It
Niamh Cusack in Steven Pimlott's production of Shakespeare's meditation. Barbican Theatre EC2 (0171-638 8891) ⊖ Barbican/Moorgate. In rep, 28 Dec, 6-7 Jan, 7.15pm, mat 28 Dec, 2pm, in rep until 29 Mar, £6-£24.50. 195 mins.

The Beauty Queen Of Leenane
Revival of Martin McDonagh's comic drama set in Connemara. *Royal Court Theatre (at the Duke Of York's)* St Martin's Lane WC2 (0171-565 5000) ⊖ Leicester Square/Charing Cross. Mon-Sat 7.30pm (no perf 1 Jan), mats Sat 3.30pm, ends 11 Jan, £5-£18, benches 10p, Mon all seats £5. 130 mins.

Blinded By The Sun
Stephen Poliakoff's scientific detective story *stars Frances de la Tour and Graham Crowden.* National Theatre: Cottesloe South Bank SE1 (0171-928 2252) BR/⊖ Waterloo. Last *perfs 28 Dec, 2.30pm & 7.30pm, £16, restricted view £12.* 150 mins.

Blood Brothers
Phoenix Theatre Charing Cross Rd WC2 (0171-369 1733) ⊖ Leicester Square/Tottenham Ct Road. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, mats Thu 3pm, Sat 4pm, £9.50-£27.50. 165 mins.

Buddy
Strand Theatre *Aldwych WC2 (0171-930 8800)* ⊖ Covent Garden/Charing Cross. Tue-Thu 8pm, Fri 5.30pm & 8.30pm, Sat 5pm & 8.30pm, mats Sun 4pm (30 Dec & 2 Jan, 5.30pm & 8.30pm), £4.50-£28.50. 160 mins.

By Jeeves
An Andrew Lloyd Webber and Alan Ayckbourn musical collaboration based on the *PG Wodehouse stories.* Lyric Theatre Shaftesbury Avenue W1 (0171-494 5045) ⊖ Piccadilly Circus. Mon-*Sat 7.45pm, mats Wed & Sat 3pm, £11.50-£25.* 140 mins.

Cash On Delivery
Bradley Walsh plays a DSS cheat in Michael Cooney's farce. *Whitehall Theatre* Whitehall SW1 (0171-369 1735/cc 867 1111) BR/⊖ Charing Cross. Mon-Fri 8pm, Sat 8.30pm, mats Wed 3pm, *Sat 5.30pm (31 Dec, 6pm)* £10-£22. 135 mins.

Cats
New London Theatre Drury Lane WC2 (0171-405 0072/cc 404 4079) ⊖ Covent Garden/Holborn. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, mats Tue & Sat 3pm, £10.50-£32.50. 165 mins.

Le Cercle Invisible
Victoria Chaplin and Jean-Baptiste Thierree's evocative *distillation of the circus form.* Mermaid Theatre Puddle Dock EC4 (0171-236 2211) ⊖ Blackfriars. Tue-Sat 7.30pm *(30 Dec, 7.30pm, not 31 Dec, 1 Jan), mats* Sun 4pm (mat 31 Dec, 1 Jan, 4pm), ends 12 Jan, £13.50-£19.50, concs & standby £10, *child £10, family of four £50.* 120 mins.

The Cherry Orchard
Alec McCowen and Penelope Wilton in Adrian Noble's 1995 production of Chekhov. Albery Theatre St Martin's Lane WC2 (0171-369 1730/cc 867 1111) ⊖ Leicester Square. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Thu & Sat 3pm, ends 25 Jan, £10-£25. 165 mins.

A Christmas Carol
Starring Richard Briers as the miser Scrooge. Lyric Hammersmith King St W6 (0181-741 2311) ⊖ Hammersmith. 28, 30, 31 Dec, 7.30pm, mats 28, 31, 2.30pm, ends *18 Jan, £10-£15*, under 16 £6, all seats Mon £5.

The Complete History Of America *(Abridged)*. Tue 8pm, £5.50-£20. 120 mins.
The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare (Abridged) Reduced Shakespeare Company's comic version.
Criterion Theatre Piccadilly Circus W1 (0171-369 1747) ⊖ Piccadilly Circus. Wed-Sat 8pm, mats Thu 3pm, Sat 5pm, Sun 4pm, £5.50-£20. 120 mins.

The Cripple Of Inishmaan
Nicholas Hytner directs Martin McDonagh's drama set on an island off the Irish coast. *National Theatre: Cottesloe* South Bank SE1 (0171-928 2252) ⊖ Waterloo. In rep, 2-4, 6 Jan, 7.30pm, 7 Jan, 7pm, mats 4 Jan, 2.30pm, continuing, £16, restricted view £12.

Death Of A Salesman
Alun Armstrong stars in Arthur Miller's searing study of family conflict. National Theatre: Lyttelton South Bank *SE1 (0171-928 2252) ⊖ Waterloo. In rep,* 28, 30-31 Dec, 1 Jan, 7.30pm, mats 28, 31 Dec, 2.15pm, continuing, £8-£24. 175 mins.

A Doll's House
Ibsen's study of marital frustration stars Janet McTeer and Owen Teale. Playhouse Theatre Northumberland Avenue WC2 (0171-839 4401) ⊖ Embankment. *Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Sat 2.30pm* (2 Jan, 2.30pm & 7.30pm, no perf 31 Dec) ends 11 Jan, £10-£23.50. 180 mins.

Don't Dress For Dinner
Duchess Theatre Catherine Street WC2 (0171-494 5075/cc 344 4444) ⊖ Covent Garden. Mon-Fri 8pm, Sat 5pm & 8.30pm, mats Wed 3pm, £9-£19.50. 165 mins.

Elsinore
A dizzying combination of stagecraft, cinema and multimedia. *National Theatre: Lyttelton South Bank* SE1 (0171-928 2252) BR/⊖ Waterloo. From 4 Jan, Mon-Sat 7.30pm, ends 11 Jan, *£8-£24.* 105 mins.

Fair Ladies At A Game Of Poem Cards
A young samurai and a maid fall in love in this tale of forbidden courtly love. National Theatre: Cottesloe South Bank *SE1 (0171-928 2252) BR/⊖ Waterloo.* In rep, 30-31 Dec, 1 Jan, 7.30pm, ends 29 Jan, £16, restricted view £12. 165 mins.

Grease
Cambridge Theatre Earlham Street WC2 (0171-494 5080) ⊖ Covent Garden. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Wed & Sat 3pm (1 Jan, 7.30pm only, 2 Jan, 3pm & 7.30pm) £10-£27.50. 150 mins.

Guys And Dolls
Richard Eyre's production of Frank Loesser's *Broadway-set musical stars Clarke Peters and Joanna Riding.* National Theatre: Olivier South Bank SE1 *(0171-928 2252) BR/⊖ Waterloo. Mon-Sat* 7.15pm, mats Sat 2pm (extra mat 31 Dec, 2pm), ends 29 Mar, £12-£32.50. 165 mins.

The Herbal Bed
Peter Whelan's emotional thriller inspired by a real-life scandal involving Shakespeare's daughter. Barbican: The Pit Barbican Centre EC2 (0171-638 8891) ⊖ Barbican/Moorgate. In rep, 31 Dec, 1, 2 Jan, 7.15pm, mat 2 Jan, 2pm, ends 16 Jan, £10-£17. 160 mins.

An Ideal Husband
Simon Ward and Carol Drinkwater in Peter Hall's revival of his 1992 production. Old Vic Waterloo Rd SE1 (0171-928 6655) ⊖ Waterloo. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Wed & Sat 3pm, ends 25 Jan, £6-£24. 165 mins.

An Inspector Calls
Garrick Theatre Charing Cross Road WC2 (0171-494 5085) ⊖ *Leicester Square.* Mon-Fri 7.45pm, Sat 8.15pm, mats Wed 2.30pm, Sat 5pm, £9-£24.50. 110 mins.

Jesus Christ Superstar
Lyceum Theatre Wellington Street WC2 (0171-656 1802) ⊖ Charing Cross/Embankment. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, mats Wed & Sat 3pm, £15-£32.50. 165 mins.

Jolson
Victoria Palace Victoria Street SW1 (0171-834 1317) ⊖ *Victoria.* Tue-Sat *7.30pm, mats* Wed, Thu & Sat 3pm, £12.50-£30. 170 mins.

Laughter On The 23rd Floor
Gene Wilder plays a 1950s television comic besieged by McCarthyism in Neil Simon's comedy. Queen's Theatre Shaftesbury Avenue W1 (0171-494 5590/cc 0171-344 4444) ⊖ Piccadilly Circus. Mon-Sat 8pm, mats Wed 2.30pm, Sat 4pm, £9.50-£25. 140 mins.

The Learned Ladies
Steven Pimlott directs Molière's social satire, with Niamh Cusack and Roger Allam. Barbican: The Pit Barbican Centre EC2 (0171-638 8891) ⊖ Barbican/Moorgate. In rep, 3 & 4 Jan, 7.15pm, mat 4 Dec, 2pm, ends 8 Feb, £10-£17. 165 mins.

Les Misérables
Palace Theatre Shaftesbury Avenue W1 *(0171-434 0909)* ⊖ Piccadilly Circus. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Thu & Sat 2.30pm, £7-£30. 195 mins.

Macbeth
Roger Allam heads Tim Albery's production of Shakespeare's tragedy. Barbican Theatre Barbican Centre EC2 (0171-638 8891) ⊖ Barbican/Moorgate. In *rep, 31 Dec, 1 & 2 Jan, 7.15pm, mat 2 Jan,* 2pm, ends 27 Mar, £6-£24.50. 195 mins.

Martin Guerre
Iain Glen in Boublil and Schonberg's epic. Prince Edward Theatre Old Compton Street W1 (0171-447 5400) ⊖ Leicester Square. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, mats Thu & Sat 3pm, £16.50-£32.50. 150 mins.

Miss Saigon
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane Catherine Street WC2 (0171-494 5060) ⊖ Covent Garden. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, mats Wed & Sat 3pm, £8.50-£32.50. 165 mins.

The Mousetrap
St Martin's Theatre West Street WC2 (0171-836 1443) ⊖ Leicester Square. Mon-Sat *8pm, mats Tue 2.45pm, Sat 5pm* (31 Dec, 2.45pm & 8pm), £8-£22. 135 mins.

Nine
Fellini-inspired musical about a film-maker whose woman trouble causes a creative block. Donmar Warehouse Earlham Street WC2 (0171-369 1732) ⊖ Leicester Square. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Wed & Sat 3pm, ends 8 Mar, £12-£25. 120 mins.

The Official Tribute To The Blues Brothers
Comic concert musical featuring the cult R&B heroes. Apollo Theatre Shaftesbury Avenue W1 (0171-494 5070) ⊖ Piccadilly Circus. *Mon-Thu 8pm, Fri & Sat 6pm & 9pm, ends* 18 Jan, £7.50-£25. 130 mins.

Old Wicked Songs
A young concert pianist finds it's good to talk with an older professor in Jon Marans' drama, starring Bob Hoskins. Gielgud Theatre Shaftesbury Ave W1 (0171-494 5065) ⊖ Picc Circus. *Mon-Sat 7.30pm,* mats Thu 2.30pm, Sat 4pm, £9-£24. 120 mins.

Oliver!
London Palladium Argyll Street W1 (0171-494 5020/5038) ⊖ Oxford Circus. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Wed & Sat 2.30pm, £10-£32.50. 150 mins.

The Phantom Of The Opera
Her Majesty's Theatre Haymarket *SW1* (0171-494 5400/cc 0171-344 4444) ⊖ Piccadilly Circus, Mon-Sat 7.45pm, mats Wed & Sat 3pm, £9-£30. 150 mins.

Plunder
Griff Rhys Jones stars in Ben Travers' farce about the attempt to win an inheritance. Savoy Theatre Strand WC2 (0171-836 8888/9/cc 0479) ⊖ Charing Cross/Embankment. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Thu & Sat 2.30pm, £10-£25. 160 mins.

Riverdance - The Show
Hammersmith Apollo Queen Caroline St W6 (0171-416 6080) ⊖ Hammersmith. *Mon-Sat 8pm, mats Sat 2.30pm, (29 Dec,* 8pm, 30 Dec, 2.30pm & 8pm) ends 18 Jan, £12-£28.50 plus £1.50 booking fee. 140 mins.

Scrooge
Anthony Newley humbugs his way through the Dickensian Christmas musical. Dominion Theatre Tottenham Court Road W1 (0171-416 6060) ⊖ Tottenham Ct Rd. *Mon-Sat 7.30pm* (not 31 Dec, 1 Jan), mats Thu & Sat 3pm (extra mats 30-31 Dec, 3 Jan, 3pm), ends 1 Feb, £5.50-£27.50. 150 mins.

Smokey Joe's Cafe - The Songs Of Leiber And Stoller
The rock and roll hitmakers celebrated in a musical revue that includes Jailhouse Rock. Prince of Wales Theatre Coventry Street W1 (0171-839 5972) ⊖ Leicester Square/Piccadilly Circus. Mon-Sat 8pm, mats Thu & Sat 3pm, £15-£30. 135 mins.

Starlight Express
Apollo Victoria Wilton Road SW1 (0171-416 6070) BR/⊖ Victoria. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, mats Tue & Sat 3pm (2 Jan, 3pm & 7.45pm), £12.50-£30. 150 mins.

A Streetcar Named Desire
Tennessee Williams' tense drama stars Jessica Lange and Toby Stephens. *Theatre Royal Haymarket SW1 (0171-930 8800)* ⊖ Picc Circus. Mon-Sat 7.45pm (30 Dec, 7pm), mats Thu & Sat 3pm, £10-£30.

Sunset Boulevard
Adelphi Theatre Strand WC2 (0171-344 0055) ⊖ Charing Cross. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, mats Thu & Sat 3pm, £15-£32.50. 160 mins.

Talking Heads
Alan Bennett monologues performed by Maggie Smith and Margaret Tyzack. Comedy Theatre Panton St SW1 (0171-*369 1731)* ⊖ Picc Circus. Perfs resume 5 Jan, then Mon-Sat 8pm, mats Thu 3pm, Sat 5pm, ends 1 Feb, £8-£25. 110 mins.

Tommy
Shaftesbury Theatre Shaftesbury Avenue *WC2 (0171-379 5399) ⊖ Holborn/Tottenham* Court Road. Mon-Thu 8pm, Fri & Sat 8.30pm, mats Fri 5.30pm, Sat 3pm, £10.50-£30. 135 mins.

Troilus & Cressida
Joseph Fiennes and Victoria Hamilton head Ian Judge's production of Shakespeare's epic. Barbican Theatre Barbican Centre EC2 (0171-638 8891) ⊖ Barbican/Moorgate. In rep, 3-4 Jan, 7pm, mat 4 Jan, 1.30pm, ends 25 Mar, £6-£24.50. 200 mins.

The White Devil
John Webster's disturbingly violent Jacobean thriller. *Barbican: The Pit Barbican Centre EC2* (0171-638 8891) ⊖ Barbican/Moorgate. In rep, 28, 30-31 Dec, 6 Jan, 7.15pm, mat 28 *Dec, 2pm, ends 29 Mar, £10-£17.*

Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?
Albee's manipulative tragi-comedy starring Diana Rigg and David Suchet. Aldwych Theatre Aldwych WC2 (0171-416 6003/cc 836 2428) ⊖ Holborn. Mon-Sat 7.15pm, mats Sat 2.15pm (no perf 31 Dec, 5pm only), £7.50-£25. 175 mins.

The Witches
A boy and his grandmother join forces against the witches in David Wood's adaptation of Roald Dahl's novel. Vaudeville Theatre Strand WC2 (0171-836 9987) BR/⊖ Charing Cross. Mon-Sat 7pm, mats Tue-Fri 2pm, Sat 11.00am & 2pm (*extra mat 31 Dec, 11.00am, & 2pm). £9.50-£18, child £6.50-£12.* 120 mins.

The Woman In Black
Fortune Theatre Russell Street WC2 (0171-836 2238/cc 344 4444) ⊖ Covent Garden/Holborn. Mon-Sat 8pm, mats Tue 3pm, Sat 4pm, £8.50-£20. 110 mins.

LONDON FRINGE

ALMEIDA THEATRE
A Midsummer Night's Dream Angela Thorne as Titania in Jonathan Miller's production. Almeida Street N1 (0171-359 4404) ⊖ Angel. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Sat 3pm (no perfs 31 Dec-1 Jan), ends 1 Feb, £6.50-£19.50, concs available.

ARTS THEATRE
Darkdales Ghostly thriller in which two men of letters battle it out at a party. *Great Newport St WC2 (0171-836 2132/cc 741 9999)* ⊖ Leicester Sq. Mon-Sat 8pm, mat Sat 5.30pm, ends 1 Jan, £12.50, concs £7.50.

THE BRIDEWELL
Marry Me A Little Stephen Sondheim musical about two lonely people, performed by the Bridewell's own superb company. Bride Lane, Fleet Street EC4 (0171-936 *3456)* ⊖ *Blackfriars.* 28-30 Dec, 1-4 Jan, 7.30pm, mat 5 Jan, 4.30pm, ends 11 Jan, £6.50, concs £5.

COCHRANE THEATRE
Cold Comfort Farm Michael Friend's adaptation of Stella Gibbons' satire of melodramatic rustic novels. Southampton Row WC1 (0171-242 7040) ⊖ Holborn. Mon-Sat 7.30pm (not 1 Jan), mat 28 Dec, 3pm, ends 11 Jan, £8.50, concs £5.50, Mon all seats £5.

DRILL HALL ARTS CENTRE
Dick Daredevil New musical about science fiction radio adventures of the '40s. Chenies Street WC1 (0171-637 8270) ⊖ Goodge St. Tue-Sun 7.30pm, ends 18 Jan, £7-£14.

THE GRACE THEATRE
Guards! Guards! *First staging of one of* Terry Pratchett's comic Discworld novels. Battersea Park Rd SW11 (0171-223 3549) BR:*Clapham Junction.* Daily 8pm (not 31 Dec, 6 Jan), mats Sat & Sun 4pm, ends 11 Jan, £8, concs £6, pay what you can Tues.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE
The Eleventh Commandment David Schneider stars in his own comedy about a Jewish estate agent with mother trouble. Avenue Road NW3 (0171-722 9301) ⊖ Swiss Cottage. Mon-Sat 8pm, mats Sat 3.30pm, £11 (Tue-Fri), £13.50 (Sat eve), Mon & mats £8.

LYRIC STUDIO
The Truman Capote Talk Show Bob Kingdom's one man recreation of the US writer centres on his fall from grace. In rep, 28, 30 Dec, 4, 6 Jan, 8pm, mat 2 Jan, 4.30pm, ends 11 Jan, £8.50, concs £5, all seats Mon £5.
Dylan Thomas: Return Journey Anthony Hopkins directs Bob Kingdom in a portrait of the Welsh writer. King St W6 (0181-741 2311) ⊖ Hammersmith. In rep, 31 Dec, 2-3 Jan, 8pm, mats 28 Dec, 4 Jan, 4.30pm, ends 11 Jan, £8.50, concs £5, all seats Mon £5.

ORANGE TREE THEATRE
Family Circles Wedding anniversary chaos *ensues in the 25th anniversary revival of* Ayckbourn's comedy. Clarence Street, Richmond, Surrey (0181-*940 3633)* ⊖ *Richmond. Mon-Sat 7.45pm* (not 1 Jan), mats Sat 4pm, 2 Jan, 2.30pm, 3 Jan, 4pm, £9-£14.50, concs available.

Pop & jazz

LONDON

SATURDAY 28

Bjorn Again Ever-popular Australian Abba. The Island High Road, *Ilford (0181-514 4400)* BR: Seven Kings. 8pm, £13.50-£15.

Gallon Drunk, Pimp Moody and menacing rock'n'roll from James Johnston and band's new album, In The Long Still Night, plus sleaze-funk showmen Pimp in support. Garage Highbury Corner N5 (0171-607 1818/cc 344 0044) ⊖ Highbury & Islington. 8pm, £6.

Scott Hamilton/Warren Vache Quartet Popular 1940s swing revivalists from the States, on tenor sax and trumpet respectively. Pizza Express Dean St W1 (0171-439 8722) ⊖ Tottenham Ct Rd. 8pm, ends 7 Jan, £20.

Lunasead, Drake, Athletico Strip Hard funk from the headliners. The Monarch Chalk Farm Road NW1 *(0171-916 1049)* ⊖ Chalk Farm. 8pm, £5.

James Taylor Quartet Hammond-led acid jazz funk team. Jazz Cafe Parkway, NW1 *(0171-916 6060)* ⊖ Camden Town. 7pm, ends 31 Dec, £12.50-£15 (phone for availability).

Stan Tracey Quartet with Gerard Presencer Leading British bebop piano veteran. Vortex Stoke *Newington Church St N16* (0171-254 6516) BR: Stoke Newington. 9pm, £7.50.

SUNDAY 29

Del Amitri Bedtime blues-rock from the perpetually downtrodden foursome. Kilburn National Ballroom Kilburn High Road NW6 (0171-328 3141) ⊖ Kilburn. 7.30pm, phone for availability.

Scott Hamilton/Warren Vache See Saturday. Pizza Express Dean Street 8pm, £14.

James Hunter Band Blues and R&B from new album, Believe What I Say. *100 Club Oxford St W1 (0171-636 0933)* ⊖ Oxford Circus. 7.30pm, £7, mems £5.

Bert Jansch Folk and blues from the acoustic guitarist of Pentangle fame. Half Moon Lower Richmond Rd SW15 (0181-780 9383) ⊖ Putney Bridge. 8.30pm, £6.

Jazz Rumours New Year Seasonal party with London's top freeform jazzers including saxist Elton Dean, pianist Alex Maguire, bassist Roberto Bellatalla, drummer Mark Sanders and guests. Vortex Stoke Newington Church Street N16 (0171-254 6516) BR: Stoke Newington. 8.30pm, £5, concs £4.

Planet Of The Apes Peerlessly presented trashy, brassy, garage rock, standards and theme tunes. Boston Arms Junction Road N19 (0171-272 3411) ⊖ Tufnell Park. 8pm, free.

James Taylor Quartet See Saturday. Jazz Cafe 7pm, £12.50-£15.

MONDAY 30

Scott Hamilton/Warren Vache See Saturday. Pizza Express Dean Street 8pm, £14.

Donell Jones, Men of Vizion, Dru Hill US R&B and swingbeat. Hammersmith Palais Shepherds Bush Road W6 (0181-748 2812) ⊖ Hammersmith. 8pm, £22.

Louis Moholo Quartet South African drummer, noted for his work with Sun Ra and Stevie Wonder, here with London's free jazz elite. Vortex *Stoke Newington Church St N16* (0171-254 6516) BR: Stoke Newington. 8.30pm, £5.

James Taylor Quartet See Saturday. Jazz Cafe 7pm, £12.50-£15.

Stan Tracey *70th Birthday Concert* Britain's foremost jazz pianist with a 15-piece featuring Bobby Wellins, Peter King, *Art Theman and Gerard Presencer.* Bull's Head Lonsdale Road SW13 (0181-876 5241) BR: Barnes Bridge. 8pm, £8.

TUESDAY 31

Abba Gold, Woody Bop Muddy Abba tribute, with record-smashing comedian WBM. The Forum Highgate Road NW5 (0171-344 0044) BR/⊖ Kentish Town. 8pm-3am, £15.

Asiko Ghanaian hi-life, jazz, funk, zouk and reggae fusionists. Pink Parachute *Club Lewisham Labour* Club, Limes Grove SE13 (0181-690 0431) BR: Ladywell/Lewisham. 9pm, £5, £4 with this publication.

Bjorn Again See Saturday. *Blackheath Concert Halls* Lee Road SE3 (0181-463 0100) BR: Blackheath. 9pm, £30.

Alan Burke, Steafan Hannigan & Terese Heanue Celtic folk session with Burke of Afterhours and Sin-E's Hannigan and Heanue. *Hammersmith* & Fulham Irish Centre Blacks Road W6 (0181-563 8232) ⊖ Hammersmith. 8pm, phone for prices.

David Devant & His Spirit Wife Glammy English pop with shades of the music hall. The Powerhaus Seven Sisters Road N4 (0171-344 0044) ⊖ Finsbury Park. 8pm, £8.

Dr Didg Didgeridoo-fronted world music. *Mean Fiddler, Acoustic Room High Street* NW10 (0181-961 5490/cc 734 8932) BR: Willesden Junction. 8pm, £9.

Edward II, Wavet Folk and reggae dance band with soul, calypso and reggae support. Watermans Arts Centre High Street, Brentford, Middlesex (0181-568 1176) ⊖ Gunnersbury. 8.30pm, £15.

The Egg New Age psychedelic techno. Splash at The Falcon Royal College Street NW1 (0171-482 2022) ⊖ Camden Town. 7.30pm, £10.

Mike Fab-Gere & The Permissive Society Kitsch seventies covers. The Roadhouse The Piazza, Covent Garden Market WC2 (0171-240 6001) ⊖ Covent Garden. 9pm, £20.

Johnny Guitar & Will Kevans Blues and roots-rock. *12 Bar Club Denmark St* WC2 (0171-916 6989) ⊖ Tottenham Court Road. 8pm, £10.

Scott Hamilton/Warren Vache See Saturday. Pizza Express Dean Street 8pm, £14.

Limehouse Lizzy Thin Lizzy tribute. *Mean Fiddler* Harlesden High Street NW10 (0181-961 5490) BR: Willesden Junction. 8pm, £7.

LL Cool J, Total, Das EFX, Shai, Shola Ama Old skool smoochy rapper LLCJ heads this hip hop affair. London Arena Limeharbour, Isle Of Dogs E14 (0171-538 1212) DLR: Cross Harbour. 6.30pm, £30.

My Life Story, Bikini Beach Band Pop melodrama from Jake Shillingford's string-*laden big band MLS, with Hawaiian covers* from BBB. Hackney Empire Mare Street E8 (0181-985 2424) *BR: Hackney Central. 9pm-3am, £15.*

Orbital The *festival-friendly techno duo head a Hogmanay rave-up* with DJs Sven Vath, Gayle San, Sasha and Jon Digweed, Paul Oakenfold, Marshall Jefferson, Chemical Brothers and James Lavelle. Alexandra Palace Wood Green N22 (0171-344 0044) BR: Alexandra Palace. 8pm-8am, phone for availability.

The Popes Celtic folk-rock from Shane MacGowan's band. The Swan Clapham Road SW9 (0171-978 9778) ⊖ Stockwell. 8pm, £10.

Push, Eva Seventies-style funk from Push, with psychedelic folk from Eva-lution's Eva. *Jackson's Lane Community Centre* Archway Road N6 (0181-341 4421) ⊖ Highgate. 8pm, £15.

Ian Shaw with Carol Grimes *Extraordinary* soul-jazz singer and pianist duets with bluesy diva Carol Grimes. Vortex Stoke Newington Church St N16 (0171-254 6516) BR: Stoke Newington. 9pm, £12.

James Taylor Quartet See Saturday. Jazz Cafe 7pm, £12.50-£15.

Tiger, Toaster Much-tipped synth-led team in the Stereolab drone-pop vein. Garage Highbury Corner N5 (0171-607 1818) ⊖ *Highbury & Islington. 8pm, £10-£12.*

WEDNESDAY 1

Bobby Wellins/Scott Stroman Quintet Mainstream jazz tenorist duets with trombonist Stroman, featuring charismatic *drummer Brian Abrahams.* Vortex Stoke Newington Church Street N16 (0171-254 6516) *BR:* Stoke Newington. *8.30pm, £6.*

THURSDAY 2

Christine Tobin, Richard Fairhurst's Hungry Ants Babel Records showcase with folk-edged Irish jazz singer Christine Tobin plus pianist Richard Fairhurst's spiky contemporary quartet The Hungry Ants. Jazz Cafe Parkway NW1 (0171-916 6060) ⊖ Camden Town. 7pm, £8.

Scott Hamilton/Warren Vache See Saturday. Pizza Express Dean Street 8pm, £16.

FRIDAY 3

Julian Arguelles & the Vortex Jazz Quartet *Left-field ex-Loose Tubes tenorist, with guitarist John Parricelli and pianist Huw Warren.* Vortex Stoke Newington Church Street N16 *(0171-254 6516) BR: Stoke Newington.* 8.30pm, £5.

The Candyskins Sixties-rooted Oxford rockers. The Island High Road, Ilford (0181-514 4400) BR: Seven Kings. 9.30pm, £5, £3.50 *before 10pm.*

Scott Hamilton/Warren Vache See Saturday. Pizza Express Dean Street 8pm, £20.

Robert Maseko & Chaka Chaka Soukous Zairean bandleader with full band line-up and dancers. Africa Centre King St WC2 (0171-312 1996) ⊖ Covent Gn/Leicester Sq. 9pm, £6-£7.

The Meteors Psychobilly band from the Eighties Klub Foot days. *Venue Clifton Rise SE14 (0181-692 4077)* BR: New Cross. 8pm, £5, concs £3 before 9.30pm.

Houston Person Bluesy US soul-jazz tenor veteran and one-time Etta James sidekick. *Jazz Cafe Parkway NW1 (0171-916 6060)* ⊖ Camden. 7pm, ends 4 Jan, £12, adv £10.

A Tribute to Phil Lynott With Dizzy Lizzy, Rude Awakening, The Big Generator, The River Gods, and Philomena Lynott. *Kilburn National Ballroom* Kilburn High Road NW6 (0171-328 3141) ⊖ Kilburn. 7pm, £10.

REGIONAL

BOXFORD

Peter King Highly advanced bebop shoim. Boxford Fleece Jazz Club Broad Street (01787-210247) 3 Jan, 8.30pm, £9.

BRISTOL

Doreen Doreen Bristol covers band. Fiddlers Willway Street, Bedminster (0117-987 3403) 31 Dec, 7.30pm, £8-£10.

K-Passa Local cajun team. The Fleece St Thomas Street (0117-927 7150) 31 Dec, 7.30pm, £8.

CAMBRIDGE

The Frigidaires R&B team. Boat Race East *Road (01223-570063)* 3 Jan, 7pm, £3-£4.

CHELTENHAM

Mike D'Abo & His Mighty Quinn Singer of Sixties popsters Manfred Mann. Town Hall Imperial Square (01242-227979). 31 Dec, 8.45pm, phone for availability.

CRONDALL

Jack Tyldesley & Gavin Lowery Cajun duo. The Pit Itchel Lane (01252-850789) 31 Dec, 7.30pm, £30 inc dinner.

GUILDFORD

Dr Feelgood, Colin John Band Pub-rock era Southend R&B boys, with Texan blues from John. Chiddingfold Club (01483-712483) 28 Dec, 8pm, phone for prices.

IPSWICH

The Hamsters Southend blues-rockers. Railway Hotel Foxhall Road (01473-728700) 29 Dec, 8pm, phone for prices.

KINGSTON UPON THAMES

Limehouse Lizzy Thin Lizzy tribute. *Gray Horse Richmond Road (0181-546 4818)* 29 Dec, 8.30pm, £5.

PORTSMOUTH

Ruthless Blues Stevie Smith's bar-room bluesers. 29 Dec, 6.45pm, £6.
Limehouse Lizzy Thin Lizzy tribute. Wedgewood Rooms Albert Road (01705-863911) 3 Jan, 8pm, £5.

SOUTHAMPTON

Todd Miller & The Joe Loss Orchestra US veteran joins the swing band bequeathed by big Joe. 28 Dec, 7.30pm, £10.
The Glitter Band, Glam Slam, Rubberband Glam-rocking Hogmanay with Gary's erstwhile backing band. *Guildhall NorthGuild, Commercial Road* (01703-632601) 31 Dec, 7.30pm, £15.

Clubs

LONDON

SATURDAY 28

THE END Sub-Terrain's First Birthday Pure techno liberation with Colin Faver and Dave Angel. West Central Street WC1 (0171-419 9199) ⊖ Tottenham Court Road/Holborn. 11pm-6am, £13, mems £10.

BAGLEYS STUDIOS Freedom Freestyle *night of house, garage, handbag, acid jazz* and beyond. York Way N1 (0171-278 2777) ⊖ Kings Cross. 10pm-8am, £12, mems £8, *£5/£4 after 4am.*

MINISTRY OF SOUND Rollin' CJ Mackintosh's birthday party with Terry Farley, Pete Heller and Rocky. Gaunt Street SE1 (0171-378 6528) ⊖ Elephant and Castle. midnight-9am, £15, mems £10.

SW1 The Real Thing Two arenas of house and garage with residents Drew, POD, Scott Garcia and Gee-Smoove *joined by a weekly rotational of guests.* Victoria Street SW1 (0171-630 8980) ⊖ Victoria. 10pm-6am, £12, £10 before 11pm, £6 after 3am.

TURNMILLS Banzai DJs from Mo'Wax, *Athletico, Skint and Weird Beats Collective* entertain and delight. Clerkenwell Road EC1 (0171-250 3409) ⊖ Farringdon. 9.30pm-3.30am, £8, £7 before 11pm.

SUNDAY 29

THE ROCKET **The Music Temple** Trippy soul and hip hop, dubby drum'n'bass, deepest house and garage and disco flash from Hippi Dred, Danny Digital and others. *Holloway Road N7 (0171-607 2789)* ⊖ Holloway Road. 7pm-2am, £5, concs £4.

THE GARDENING CLUB Sunflowers Attitude-free house with Tony Price and Bald *Paul Johanson. The Piazza WC2 (0171-497 3153/4)* ⊖ Covt Garden. 8pm-3am, £6.

LA2 Club X Indie and alt.rock, from Blur to the Chemical Bros via the Prodigy. Charing Cross Rd WC2 (0171-434 0403) ⊖ Tottenham Court Road. 10pm-6am, £8, NUS £6.

SMITHFIELD'S Lazy Christmas bash with Derrick Carter, Luke Solomon and Jerry B. *Farringdon Street EC1 (0171-248 5311)* ⊖ Farringdon. 7pm-12midnight, £4, NUS £3.

MONDAY 30

THE CLINIC Decisions Electro, techno, hip *hop and drum'n'bass freestyling with* The Runaways and Req 1. Gerrard Street W1 (0171-734 9836) ⊖ Leicester Square. 10pm-*3am,* £5, concs £4.

TUESDAY 31

CLOUD 9 **Strawberry Sundae New Years Eve** This promises to be the biggest club night ever in central London. Tickets available from Virgin *Megastore.* Albert Embankment SW8 (0171-735 5590) ⊖ Vauxhall. 10pm-8am, £25.

THE END New Years Eve Techno and Deep house freak-out with Darren Emerson, Tom Parris (Antibes) and Hector Romero (New York). West Central Street WC1 (0171-419 9199) ⊖ Tottenham Court Road/Holborn. *9pm-7am, £30 in adv.*

THE COLOSSEUM Satellite's New Years Eve Deep house to funky techno with Terry Hunter, garage with Ricky Morrison and R&B, hip hop and drum'n'bass. Nine Elms Lane SE11 (0171-720 9300/info 287 6171) ⊖ Vauxhall. 8pm-very late, £35, adv £30.

BLUE NOTE New Years Eve Party Two *floors of raw acid jazz,* drum'n'bass and soul movers. Hoxton Sq N1 (0171-729 8440/ info 287 1887) ⊖ Old Street. 10pm-late, £25 in *adv from Ticket Master/Mr Bongo.*

BRIXTON ACADEMY *Return To The Source* Goan trance New Year's special. Stockwell Road SW9 (0171-934 9999) BR/⊖ Brixton. 9pm-6am, £23.50.

WKD CAFE Steppin' 97 New Years Eve Live jazz fusion with Courtney Buchanan and hip hop, drum'n'bass and soul from a selection of eager DJs. Kentish Town Road NW1 (0171-267 1869/info 0181 931 1183/0956 322707) ⊖ Camden. 9pm-5am, £10.

THE FRIDGE **Return** Goa style trance from Medicine Drum, Mark Allen and Australasia. Town Hall Parade, Brixton Hill SW2 *(0171-326 5100)* ⊖ *Brixton.* 9pm-6am, £23.50.

JAZZ BISTRO Freeform V Where's Jude New Years Eve Dark funk, spacey jazz and breakbeat wierdness par excellence from Patrick Forge and Dean Rudland. Farringdon Street EC1 (0171-236 8112) ⊖ Farringdon. 9pm-2.30am, £15 adv from Soul Jazz, Blackmarket and Jazz Bistro.

MINISTRY OF SOUND New Years Eve An all-star line-up that includes Todd Terry, Erick Morillo, Frankie Foncett and Jazzy M. Gaunt St SE1 (0171-378 6528) ⊖ Elephant & Castle. 9.30pm-10am, £35 in adv, £40 in adv includes New Years Day (11pm-6am).

WEDNESDAY 1

MINISTRY OF SOUND **New Years Day** The festivities continue with Terry Hunter, CJ Macintosh, Brandon Block and Seb Fontaine. Gaunt Street SE1 (0171-378 6528) ⊖ Elephant & Castle. 11pm-6am, £10, mems free.

VORTEX The Cube *Hard,* trancey and tuneful house with DJ Alice and guests. Oxford Street W1 (0171-724 1023) ⊖ Tottenham Court Rd. 10pm-3am, £5, mems/concs £3.

THURSDAY 2

JAZZ BISTRO Melting Pot Dub, jazzy breaks and soul love with The Merry Pranksters. *Farringdon Street EC1 (0171-236 8112)* ⊖ Farringdon. 10pm-2am, £4, concs £3.

HEAVEN Hybernation Trance, deep house and live percussion with K90, Barek and Rhythm Of Space Collective. Charing Cross Arches, Villiers Street WC2 (0171-930 2020) ⊖ Charing Cross. 9pm-3am, £3.

FRIDAY 3

SUBTERANIA Rotation A heady mix of soul, funk, jazz, reggae, hip hop and live toasting *with DJs Femi-Fem, T-Money, Dodge* and Alex Baby. Acklam Road W10 (0181-960 4590) ⊖ Ladbroke Grove. 010.30pm-3.30am, £8.

BLUE NOTE Naked Talent 97 Vibrant house and garage with DJ 279, Cutmaster Swift and St. John 'Synjen' de-Zilva. Hoxton Square N1 (0171-729 8440) ⊖ Old Street 10pm-5am, £8, £6 with flyer before 11pm/after 3am.

Exhibitions

LONDON

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA

20th Century Italian Art From Symbolism To Scuola Romana Inaugural exhibition of paintings from Museum Antcok Corrado. Tue 10am-6pm, Wed 10am-8pm, Thu-Sun 10am-6pm, ends 16 Feb, £5, concs £3, mems free. Grosvenor Place SW1 (0171-235 0303) ⊖ Hyde Park Corner/Victoria.

DESIGN MUSEUM

Charlotte Perriand: Modernist Pioneer Exploration of the life and work of the 20th century designer. Ends 13 Apr.
Conran Foundation Collection Influential collection. Mon-Fri 11.30am-6pm, Sat/Sun 12noon-6pm, ends 11 May. £4.75, concs £3.50.
Butlers Wharf, SE1 (0171-403 6933) ⊖ *Tower Hill/DLR: Tower Gateway.*

HAYWARD GALLERY

Howard Hodgkin *Survey of colourist* abstract paintings by major British painter.
Beyond Reason: Art and Psychosis Works by psychiatric patients of *Hans Prinzhorn.* Mon-Sun 10am-6pm (until 8pm Tue & Wed), ends 23 Feb, £5, concs £3.50. *Belvedere Road, SE1 (0171-960 4242)* BR/⊖ Waterloo.

NATIONAL GALLERY

Peter Blake: Now We Are 64 Re-interpretations of selected paintings by the gallery's third Associate Artist. Ends 5 Jan, free.
Making & Meaning: Rubens' Landscapes Rarely explored landscapes in the Flemish tradition. Ends 19 Jan, free.
John Julius Angerstein National Gallery Collector. Mon-Sat 10am-6pm (Wed until 8pm), Sun 12noon-6pm, ends 9 Feb, free. Trafalgar Square, WC2 (0171-839 3321) ⊖ Charing Cross.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

The Victorians to the New Elizabethans New glass-walled galleries.
Private Eye Times 1961-96 The history of the satirical magazine explored. Ends 5 Jan, free.
John Kobal Photographic Portrait Award 1996 winning photographs. Ends 19 Jan, free.
The Art of the Picture Frame Artists, patrons and the framing of portraits in Britain. Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12noon-6pm, ends 2 Feb, £3, concs £2.
St Martin's Place, WC2 (0171-306 0055) ⊖ Charing Cross.

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS

William Morris & The Crafts Today Morris explored in the context of 20th century artists. Mon-Thu 10am-10pm, *Fri* 10am-4pm, Sat/Sun 12noon-10pm, ends 17 Jan, free.
Crisp Road, W6 (0181-741 2255) ⊖ Hammersmith.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

Alberto Giacometti Major retrospective of paintings and sculpture. Ends 1 Jan. £5.50, concs £3.75-£1.
Living Bridges Proposals for a new habitable bridge. Mon-Sun 10am-6pm, ends 5 Jan, £5, *concs £3.50 Child £2.50.*
From Mantegna to Picasso: Drawings from the Thaw Collection Smorgasbord of drawings *that includes Goya, Matisse and Altdorfer.* Mon-Sun 10am-6pm, ends 19 Jan, £5, concs £3.50.
Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1 (0171-439 7438) ⊖ Piccadilly Circus/Green Park.

TATE GALLERY

Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century Includes work by Zoffany, Canaletto and Claude Lorrain. Ends 5 Jan. £6, concs £4.
Turner in the North of England, 1797 Works and journals from the artist's 18th century journey. Ends 7 Feb, free.
The Turner Prize Exhibition The four nominees for the major contemporary art prize Ends 12 Jan. £1.
Works from the Ted Power Collection Includes Brancusi, Newman and Dubuffet. Ends 16 Feb, free.
Nicholas Pope Religion-based sculpture. Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 2pm-5.50pm, ends 23 Feb, free. Millbank, SW1 (0171-887 8000) ⊖ Pimlico.

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

The Raphael Gallery Restored full-size cartoons.
American Photography 1890-1965 Major overview including Edward Steichen, Ansel Adams and Diane Arbus. Mon 12noon-5.50pm, Tue-Sun 10am-5.50pm, ends 26 Jan. £5, concs £3 (includes entrance to museum). Cromwell Road, SW7 (0171-938 8500) ⊖ South Kensington.

Dance

LONDON

LONDON COLISEUM

The Kirov Ballet: The Nutcracker The British premiere of the Kirov's version of this much-loved ballet. 28 & 31 Dec, 1-4 Jan, 7.30pm, mats 28 Dec, 1-4 Jan, 2.30pm, 31 Dec, 2pm. £12.50-£49.50. St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-632 8300) ⊖ Leicester Square/Charing Cross.

PEACOCK THEATRE

City Ballet Of London: Cinderella The new ballet company presents Matthew Hart's version. Mon-Sat 7.30pm (no perf 1 Jan), mats Sat & Dec 30 & 31 Dec, 2 Jan, 2.30pm, ends 4 Jan. £7.50-£27.50. Portugal Street, WC2 (0171-314 8800) ⊖ *Holborn.*

PICCADILLY THEATRE

Adventures In Motion Pictures: Swan Lake Matthew Bourne's acclaimed version with a male corps of swans. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats *Wed & Sat & 2 Jan, 2.30pm, (no mat 1 Jan,* £9.50-£30, standby concs available. Denman Street, W1 (0171-369 1734/casting details *0171-434 0194)* ⊖ Piccadilly Circus.

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

English National Ballet: The Nutcracker Ben Stevenson's production of the delightful Christmas ballet. Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats 28, 30-31 Dec, 1-4 Jan, 2.30pm, ends 11 Jan. £8-£35. South Bank Centre, SE1 (0171-960 4242) BR/⊖ Waterloo.

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

The Royal Ballet: Cinderella Frederick Ashton's production of *Prokofiev's beloved fairy* story. 28 & 31 Dec (Benjamin/Cassidy), 7pm, mats 28 Dec (Hatley/Trevitt), 2pm, 4 Jan (Hatley/Trevitt), 12pm. £2-£62.
The Royal Ballet: Swan Lake Anthony Dowell's sumptuous production set in Russia. 3 Jan (Yoshida/Mukhamedov) 7pm. £2-£62.Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-304 4000) ⊖ Covent Garden.

Regional

BASILDON

TOWNGATE CENTRE

Adonais Ballet Company: Sleeping Beauty New accessible version scored by Schubert, Dvorak and others. (01268-531343) 28 Dec, 7pm, mats 28, 30 Dec, 2pm, 29 Dec, 4pm, £8-£10, concs £6, family £26.

CARDIFF

ST DAVID'S HALL

Moscow City Ballet: Swan Lake Russian company present the classic ballet of ballets. 28, 30 Dec, 2.30pm & 7.30pm, 29 Dec, 5pm, 31 Dec, 2.30pm, £10.50-£25, concs available.
Moscow City Ballet: Cinderella The timeless fairy tale with Tchaikovsky's glorious score. The Hayes (01222-878444) 2-5 Jan, 7.30pm, mats 3-5 Jan, 2.30pm, £10.50-£25, concs available.

The City of London Ballet's production of Matthew Hart's Cinderella

Pick of the Day

Decisive Moments
Sun 8pm BBC2

The stories behind some of the most memorable media images of the last year are discussed by editors, picture editors and the photographers themselves – one way of remembering 1996 in all its ignominy (Dunblane, TWA flight 800, the Canary Wharf bomb, *right*...) and glory (Take That break up.... Gazza's goal against Scotland...). There's a more traditional review of the year's events on Monday 30 Dec on BBC1.

Film of the Day

Heaven and Earth
Sun 10.10pm BBC2

I'm not a great fan of Oliver Stone's bombastic, in-yer-face style of film-making, and I think his politics – if you want to be kind about it – are just a tad mixed-up. However, Stone *(left)* does breach subjects that Hollywood is largely silent about, and this 1993 offering is, in a way, the third part of his Vietnam trilogy (the other two being *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*). This time, the conflict is seen through the eyes of a Vietnamese peasant woman.

Sunday television and radio

BBC 1

7.00 NEW **Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines** (Ken Annakin 1965 UK). Jolly aviation comedy about a sponsored London to Paris air race. Stuart Whitman, Sarah Miles, James Fox and Terry-Thomas star *(67691894)*. *
9.10 News *(3685900)*.
9.15 The Good Book Guide *(S) (1109349)*.
9.30 First Light *(S) (27417)*.
10.00 NEW **Quo Vadis?** (Mervyn LeRoy 1951 US). Peter Ustinov fiddles as Rome burns, and centurion Robert Taylor falls for Christian woman Deborah Kerr *(67504374)*. *
12.45 The World's Strongest Man *(S) (105436)*. *
1.15 News *(82701829)*. *
1.25 Tom and Jerry *(48988349)*.
1.30 Just William *(R) (S) (2050-4)*. *
2.00 The Bookworm *(S) (8405)*. *
2.30 EastEnders Omnibus *(S) (3998423)*. *
3.25 The Wizard of Oz on Ice. As choreographed by Robin Cousins *(S) (3868639)*.
4.10 The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends. Animated *The Tale of Tom Kitten* and *Jemima Puddleduck* *(R) (S) (1272184)*. *
4.35 EastEnders Omnibus *(S) (3732469)*. *
5.35 News and Weather *(299610)*. *
5.50 Regional News *(483523)*.
5.55 Songs of Praise. New Year worship from Vienna *(S) (762368)*. *
6.30 Last of the Summer Wine Christmas Special *(S) (233691)*. *
7.15 Antiques Roadshow: The Next Generation. Special roadshow for youngsters from The Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh *(S) (419184)*.
8.00 Only Fools and Horses. Raquel ponders the wisdom of inviting her parents to a dinner party at Nelson Mandela House *(S) (5233)*. *
9.00 Way Out West Starring Richard Wilson. *See Preview, p24 (S) (290813)*. *
9.50 News and Weather *(574436)*. *
10.05 The Frank Skinner Show *(S) (229146)*.
10.45 The Spirit of 66 with Alf Garnett. Curious programme in which "Alf Garnett" (Warren Mitchell) presents moments from the World Cup of 1966 with music, comedy and news footage of that year. Any reason? *(971726)*.
11.45 NEW **Alfie** (Lewis Gilbert 1966 UK). Michael Caine sleeps his way through the birds of Swinging London in this influential sex comedy. Millicent Martin, Jane Asher, Denholm Elliott and Shelley Winters co-star *(543894)*.
1.35 NEW **Funeral in Berlin** (Guy Hamilton 1966 UK). Michael Caine again – this time in Harry Palmer mode in the follow-up to the previous year's *The Ipcress File* *(766498)*.
3.15 Weather *(41892450)*. *To 3.20am.*

BBC 2

7.30 Children's BBC: Joe 90. 7.55 Playdays. 8.15 Bitsa. 8.30 Jackanory Gold. 8.45 Highlander. * 9.10 The Itsy Bitsy Spider. 9.30 Incredible Games. * 10.00 The Mask. * 10.25 Grange Hill. * 10.50 Blue Peter: The Best Bits. * 11.20 Bay City.
11.45 The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures. Professor Simon Conway Morris discusses how the study of fossils can provide a fascinating insight into ancient natural history, recording clues as to the speed of the earth's rotation and the movement of prehistoric animals *(S) (892610)*. *
12.45 The Simpsons *(S) (9180271)*. *
1.10 NEW **Fantastic Voyage** (Richard Fleischer 1966 US). A top scientist suffers severe brain damage during an assassination attempt, forcing a medical team to be miniaturised to microscopic size and injected inside his body to effect a miracle cure. Not available on the NHS. Starring Raquel Welch and Donald Pleasence *(60390639)*. *
2.45 Cartoons *(3990829)*.
3.00 The Phil Silvers Show. Bilko reveals his gambling secrets while talking in his sleep *(R) (1823436)*.
3.25 The Essential Olympics. New series. Desmond Lynam celebrates 100 years of the modern games, introducing archive footage of the so-called Chariots of Fire Games of 1924 and the infamous 1936 Olympics in Berlin *(S) (8392894)*. *
4.25 Choir of the Year. The final *(S) (8568928)*.
5.15 Rugby Special. Highlights from Leicester v Harlequins, and a preview of next week's European Cup Final semi-finals *(S) (789287)*.
6.15 Star Trek: Voyager. Haakonian grief *(S) (634146)*.
7.00 American Visions. Robert Hughes concludes his excellent series with *The Age of Anxiety* – art in the age of Nixon and the Vietnam War *(S) (7455)*. *
8.00 Decisive Moments: Review of the Year. Photographers, picture editors and agencies tell the stories behind the year's newsworthy images *(S) (3875)*. * *See Pick of the Day, above.*
9.00 The Moonstone. 1/2. *See Preview, p24 (S) (5728225)*.
10.10 NEW **Heaven and Earth** (Oliver Stone 1993 US). Having chronicled the American experience of the Vietnam War, Stone turns his attention to the Vietnamese themselves – following one woman from a peaceful childhood in a peasant village through the traumatic events of the war to her role as the wife of a US serviceman in America. *See Film of the Day, above (S) (24423349)*.
12.25 Luck, Trust and Ketchup. Behind-the-scenes on Robert Altman's film *Short Cuts* *(454160)*.
2.05 Weather *(5446540)*. *To 2.10am.*

ITV/London

6.00 GMTV *(7363097)*. **9.25** The World's Greatest Magic *(5912287)*. **10.15** Link *(3517287)*. * **10.30** Sunday Live *(17338)*. **11.00** Morning Worship *(27504)*. **12.00** Sunday Live *(91558)*. **12.30** *It's a Tiny Toon Christmas (29829)*. **1.00** News *(99103900)*. **1.10** Best of Treasures *(1623981)*.
2.10 NEW **Pete's Dragon** (Don Chaffey 1977 US). Poor Disney live action and animation mix (the dragon is animated) about a lonely orphan and his protective fire-breathing chum. Jim Dale, Mickey Rooney and Helen Reddy star *(61508691)*. *
4.40 The Making of Moll Flanders. A report on the preparation and work that went into filming the recent bodice-ripper *(1249097)*.
5.10 Tales of the Turf. Final programme in the series about the world of horse racing *(7743165)*.
5.40 Local News, Weather *(556417)*. *
5.55 NEW **Sleeping Beauty** (Clyde Geronimi 1959 US). Disney animation about the young princess with the big snooze habit. Expensively made, but not one of Uncle Walt's best *(S) (4054436)*. *
7.20 News, Weather *(412455)*. *
7.30 Coronation Street. Curly is bemused to find himself the centre of attention as both Anne and Maxine confess their feelings for him. Credibility check, please *(436)*. *
8.00 NEW **The Living Daylights** (John Glen 1987 UK). Timothy Dalton makes his debut as a rather dour, po-faced James Bond, helping the Soviet authorities hunt down a renegade KGB defector who is betting for both sides. The idea was to go back to the series' roots, but that didn't spell great entertainment. Maryam d'Abo, Joe Don Baker and Art Malik "lend" support *(S) (50017691)*. *
10.25 Hale and Pace Down Under. Naughty fellas Gareth Hale and Norman Pace return from Australia with some new characters and sketches *(S) (863504)*. *
11.25 News, Weather *(201610)*. *
11.39 LWT Weather *(617542)*.
11.40 The Beatles Anthology. The moptops stop touring, retreat into the studio and return with the *Sergeant Pepper* album *(R) (S) (285368)*. *
1.40 NEW **Mahler** (Ken Russell 1974 UK). Typically daft, overblown Ken Russell biography – restrained only by the low budget. Robert Powell plays the Austrian composer, while Georgina Hale is his stifled wife, Alma *(81363837)*.
3.45 Cool Vibes *(R) (56465030)*.
4.05 NEW **The New Adventures of Pippi Longstocking** (Ken Annakin 1988) Tami Erin stars as the mischievous young girl with an amazing array of supernatural powers *(S) (47929301)*.
5.55 News *(4793214)*. *To 6.00am.*

Channel 4

6.15 NEW **Bitzi** *(R) (S) (4608184)*.
7.10 The Hill Billie Goats *(R) (7961146)*.
7.35 Biker Mice from Mars *(1676523)*.
8.00 Hang Time *(S) (7854542)*.
8.25 The Adventures of Hyperman *(7937829)*.
8.55 Insektors *(S) (9976271)*.
9.15 Saved by the Bell *(R) (928829)*. *
9.45 California Dreams *(847900)*.
10.15 Happy Days *(R) (8493320)*.
10.40 Hollyoaks Omnibus *(S) (6268542)*. *
11.40 The Waltons *(R) (3824097)*. *
12.40 God in the House. Raving Christians *(9183368)*.
1.05 Show Business *(5473233)*.
2.10 Silent Love. German short *(64667436)*.
2.30 NEW **The Robe** (Henry Koster 1953 US). Roman centurion Richard Burton annoys Caligula by converting to the new-fangled Christian faith. Jean Simmons is the reason why *(61355542)*. *
5.05 Brookside Omnibus *(S) (4694436)*. *
6.30 Two Fat Rorys. Rory Bremner celebrates his 50th show for Channel 4 with his two "characters", weatherman Ian McCaskill and Des Lynam *(894)*.
7.00 Women at Play: A Lady's Guide to Casinos. See *Preview, p24 (S) (7981)*. *
7.30 Just Dancing Around? Mark James profiles choreographer Trisha Brown, heroine of the Sixties avant-garde scene. *See Preview, p24 (S) (62707)*. *
8.30 NEW **Ride the High Country** (Sam Peckinpah 1962 US). Sam Peckinpah's second film is a beautifully photographed western starring Randolph Scott as a lawman-turned-circus sharpshooter who agrees to help transport gold bullion to a bank, but plans to steal it en route. Joel McCrea co-stars *(76573962)*. *
10.15 NEW **The Ballad of Little Jo** (Maggie Greenwald 1993 US). Interesting and unusual film starring Suzy Amis as an 1860s New York socialite thrown out of her father's house after bearing an illegitimate child and being forced to start a new life in the Wild West – as a man *(24417788)*. *
12.30 NEW **The Oklahoma Kid** (Lloyd Bacon 1939 US). James Cagney makes an unlikely cowboy as he sets out to avenge himself on Humphrey Bogart for his father's death *(38943)*.
2.00 NEW **The Public Enemy** (William A Wellman 1931 US). Classic gangster thriller lives up to its reputation. You can see why it put James Cagney on the map as the bootlegger on his way to the top, by way of smashing a grapefruit in Mae Clarke's face. Edward Woods, Jean Harlow and Joan Blondell co-star *(26382)*.
3.30 The Ricordi Saga. 4/4. Last in the series about the Ricordi family. Verdi is dead and Puccini is trying to finish *Turandot* *(78721)*. *To 5.00am.*

ITV/Regions

ANGLIA
As London except: 12.30pm James Bond Jnr *(29829)*. 1.10 The Making of Star Trek: First Contact *(30719610)*. 1.40 Kick-Off Live! *(93587436)*. 4.15 Goldeneye: The Secret Files *(647097)*. 4.45 Bugs Bunny Overtures to Disaster *(606900)*. 1.40am Instant Replay 1996 *(2737540)*. 2.40am Bushell on the Box *(5541194)*. 3.10am Funny Business *(82103382)*. 3.40am Film: Wizards of the Lost Kingdom *(3916818)*. 5.00-5.30am Not Fade Away *(99382)*.

CHANNEL 3 NORTH EAST/YORKSHIRE
As London except: 12.30pm *Channel 3 North East: World of Wonder (9189542)*. Yorkie Goals on Sunday *(9189542)*. 1.10 Coronation Street *(30719610)*. 1.40 *It's a Tiny Toon Christmas (21742639)*. 2.05 Masters of Illusion *(9814878)*. 2.55 Film: Pete's Dragon *(29425078)*. 5.25 Cartoon Time *(5696417)*. 1.40am Film: Chayel *(84013295)*. 4.35-5.55am Film: Race for Your Life, Charlie Brown *(9692769)*.

CENTRAL
As London except: 12.30pm Central Newsweek *(9189542)*. 1.10 Masters of Illusion *(9151768)*. 2.00 The Central Match – Live! *(86947894)*. 4.15-5.50pm Film: The Sleepers *(4782944)*.

HTV
As London except: 12.25pm Wales: It's a Tiny Toon Christmas *(8183786)*. Wales: Petersen *(8183786)*. 1.40 Wales: Film: Pete's Dragon *(46107465)*. 2.00 West: The West Match – Live! *(61529455)*. 3.55 Wales: Masters of Illusion *(9169097)*. 4.25 West: World of Wonder *(6460558)*. 4.50 Wales: Tellyphonin' *(24839977)*. 4.55 West: Masters of Illusion *(9117523)*. 1.40am Instant Replay 1996 *(2737540)*. 2.40am Bushell on the Box *(5541194)*. 3.10am Funny Business *(82103382)*. 3.40am Film: Wizards of the Lost Kingdom *(3916818)*. 5.00-5.30am Not Fade Away *(99382)*.

MERIDIAN
As London except: 12.30pm Cartoon Time *(3730504)*. 1.10 Film: Freeze Frame *(59422271)*. 2.40 Cartoon Time *(1528894)*. 2.45 Film: Pete's Dragon *(61345165)*. 5.20 Grass Roots Compilations *(89330097)*. 1.40am Instant Replay 1996 *(2737540)*. 2.40am Bushell on the Box *(5541194)*. 3.10am Funny Business *(82103382)*. 3.40am Film: Wizards of the Lost Kingdom *(3916818)*. 5.00-5.30am Not Fade Away *(99382)*.

WESTCOUNTRY
As London except: 12.30pm Westcountry Update *(9189542)*. 1.10 Pongo's Tail: The Making of 101 Dalmatians *(30719610)*. 1.40 Masters of Illusion *(4673417)*. 2.30 Goldeneye: The Secret Files *(75097)*. 3.30 Film: Pete's Dragon *(50509 7)*. 1.40am Instant Replay 1996 *(2737540)*. 2.40am Bushell on the Box *(5541194)*. 3.10am Funny Business *(82103382)*. 3.40am Film: Wizards of the Lost Kingdom *(3916818)*. 5.00-5.30am Not Fade Away *(99382)*.

S4C
As C4 except: 12.40pm Rownd a Rownd *(95325421)*. 1.30 Slot Meithrin *(46542)*. 2.00 Arolwg y Flwyddyn *(13813)*. 3.00 Coping with Christmas *(59001)*. 3.30 Party of Five *(9148504)*. 4.25 Brookside *(7136523)*. 5.50 News *(49081 3)*. 6.00 Antur Fawr Wow a Martyn *(23829)*. 7.30 Pobol y Cwm *(338)*. 7.30 Dechrau Canu, Dechrau Caneuol *(338)*. 8.00 Twrb *(57427 1)*. 8.55 Y Palmant Aur *(714962)*. 9.55 News *(724504)*. 10.05 Film: Shopping *(214610)*. 11.45-1.30am Film: The World's Oldest Living Bridesmaid *(658356)*.

Radio Choice

Secret Bedrooms (7pm R1) comes with a warning that some may find it distasteful; though frankly, this catalogue of the things that go on in teenage bedrooms (sex, smoking, oversleeping, untidiness) is rather less frank and fearless than most poems by the Earl of Rochester, hero of Stephen Jeffreys' play, **The Libertine** (7.30pm R3) and played by Bill Nighy *(left)*.

Radio 1

97.6-99.9MHz FM
7.00am Kevin Greening **10.00** Dave Pearce **2.00** Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation **4.00** UK Top 40 **7.00** Secret Bedrooms. *See Choice, above.* **8.00** John Peel. Festive 50 Part 4 **10.00** Best Albums of 1996 **12.00** Andy Kershaw **4.00-7.00am** Charlie Jordan

Radio 2

88-91MHz FM
7.00am Don Maclean **9.05** Steve Wright's Sunday Love Songs **11.00** The Best of Parkinson's Sunday Sun Interview **1.00** Desmond Carrington **3.00** Benny Green **4.00** A Year to Remember **4.30** Sing Something Simple **5.00** Pam Ayres **7.00** Hugh Scully **8.30** Sunday Half Hour **9.00** Alan Keith **10.00** The David Jacobs Collection **11.00** The Arts Programme **12.05** Adrian Finighan **3.00-7.00am** Steve Madden

Radio 3

90.2-92.4MHz FM
6.55am News Headlines; Weather. **7.00** Sacred and Profane. **8.50** Choice of Three. **9.00** Brian Kay in Vienna. **12.15** Robert Wuolley, Froberger: Toccata No 4 in F; Suite No 1 in A minor; Suite No 18 in G minor. Bach: Partita No 3 in A minor, BWV827. **1.00** The Liquid Companion. Andrew Jefford braves the horizontal rain of Islay to discover the secrets behind one of the most flavoursome whiskies produced north of the border. **1.20** Ulster Orchestra. Nielsen: Overture: Helios. Glinka: Valse-Fantaisie. Prokofiev: Piano Conerto No 2. Nielsen: Symphony No 2. **2.45** Spirit of the Age. George Pratt reports from the Armenian monastery on the island of San Lazzaro in the Venetian lagoon, one of the few places in the world still practising the ancient tradition of Armenian chant. **3.45** Thomas Hampson at the Wigmore. The American baritone Thomas Hampson in a recital given earlier this month at the Wigmore Hall, London, to mark the centenary of composer Carl Loewe. Loewe: Gruss am Meer; Die Uberfahrt; Das Fischermadchen; Uber allen Gipfeln; Der du Von der Hummel; Ich Denke Dein. Schubert: An die Leier; Memnon; Der Zumenden Diana. Die Gotter Grechenlands. Schumann: Lieder und Gesange aus dem Lynschen Intermezzo. **5.45** The Sunday Feature: Walter Legge. Walter Legge, the founder of the Philharmonia, was one of the last great impresarios, whose formidable authority helped shape postwar music. Natalie Wheen explores the man with contemporaries, colleagues and his widow. **6.30** Chopin by Arrangement. Rearrangements of music by Chopin, presented by Jeremy Nicholas. Chopin, orch Balakirev: Piano Concerto No 1 in E minor. **7.30** The Sunday Play: *The Libertine*. Set in the London of 1675, Stephen Jeffreys' drama centres on the louche figure of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. A poet, wit and Restoration hero, he was regularly banished from the court of Charles II for excesses of every kind. *See Choice, left.* **9.10** Choir Works. Francois Couperin: Messe Solonnelle a l'Usage des Paroisses. The season of music for the Mass continues with a performance from the Chapel Royal in the Palace of Versailles. **11.15** Closer to the Gods. Janet Topp-Fargion explores the African music of possession and trance, including the Ginama spirit dance from eastern Kenya, Sufi ceremonies from northern Morocco, and the calling-down of the spirits in the Bilekete cult among the Anlo people of Ghana. *(1/2)*. **11.45** Record Review. **1.00** Through the Night. **5.30-6.30am** Sequence.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6MHz FM, 198kHz LW
6.00am News. **6.10** Something Understood. **7.00** News. **7.10** Sunday Papers. **7.15** On Your Farm. **7.40** Sunday. **8.50** The Week's Good Cause. **9.00** News. **9.10** Sunday Papers. **9.15** Letter from America. **9.30** Morning Service. **10.15** The Archers. Omnibus edition. **11.15 (LW)** Test Match Special. Commentary on the fourth day of the Second Test, with Peter Baxter, Henry Blofeld and Simon Mann. **11.15 (FM)** Proud Walker. Drama telling the story of the man who single-handedly relaid the foundations of Winchester Cathedral. **11.45 (FM)** Foreign Correspondence. Red Harrison describes life in Sydney as a foreign correspondent. **12.15 (FM)** Desert Island Discs. With author Martin Amis. **12.55** Weather. **1.00** The World This Weekend. **1.10 (LW)** Test Match Special. **1.55** Shipping Forecast. **2.00 (LW)** Test Match Special. **2.00 (FM)** Gardeners' Question Time. **2.30** Classic Serial: *Alice in Wonderland*. By Lewis Carroll. Alice finds her way into a magical garden. *(2/2)*. **3.30** Pick of the Year. **4.15** Tales from the Organ Loft. Jeremy Summerly presents an in-depth insight into the world of the church organist. **5.00** Something to Write Home About. Comedy duo Sean Foley and Hamish McColl take their vaudeville show *Stop Calling Me Vernon to India*, stopping to sample the delights of Bollywood along the way. **5.30** Poetry Please! **5.50** Shipping Forecast. **5.55** Weather. **6.00** Six O'Clock News. **6.15** United States of Anger. Gavin Esler examines why so many Americans are apathetic about politics. **6.30** Whispering Among the Leaves. Evocative recordings of woodland sounds, from rustling leaves to resonant tree trunks. **7.00** A Good Read. Sarah Dunant invites satirists John Bird and John Fortune to discuss their three favourite paperbacks. **8.00** Gardening Under the Raj. Sue Phillips examines how British horticulturalists attempted to transform the Indian landscape. **8.30** Making History. Christopher Andrew continues his intimate look at the work of historians. **9.00** Glory Days. **9.30** Strictly TT. An appreciative profile of Terry-Thomas by Michael Pointon. **10.00** News. **10.15** Medicine Now. **10.45** Breakaway. **11.15** Ode to Hilversum. An look at how the medium of radio complements and inspires poetry. With contributions from Brendan Kennelly, Gillian Clarke, Robert Crawford, Kathleen Jamie and Ken Smith. **11.45** Seeds of Faith. Mike Ford embarks on a pilgrimage to Ephesus in western Turkey, meeting pilgrims from across the world as they travel in the footsteps of St Paul. *12.00* News. **12.20** Bells on Sunday. From Orleans, Massachusetts. **12.30** The Late Story: *Rumpole and the Widow Twankey*. By John Mortimer. **12.48** Shipping Forecast. **1.00-6.00am** As World Service.

Radio 5

693, 909kHz MW
6.05am Hold the Front Page Christmas Special **6.30** Breakfast **9.05** Sunday with Mair **11.35** Frostbite and Footholds *12.05* The Big Byte **12.35** Crime Desk **1.05** Gary Lineker's Sunday Sport **6.05** Sportscall **7.00** News Extra **7.35** You Cannot Be Serious **8.35** The Irish in Britain **9.00** Dallyn Worldwide **10.05** Acid Test **10.35** Out This Week **11.00** Night Extra **11.35** SportsAmerica **12.05** Night Moves **2.05** Up All Night **5.05-6.00am** Entertainment '96

Classic FM

100.0-101.9MHz FM
6.00am Sarah Lucas **9.00** New Year Classic Romance **12.00** Celebrity Choice **1.00** Alan Mann's Packed Lunch **3.00** Adiemus: Songs of Sanctuary **4.00** Best of Classic Discoveries 1996 **6.00** A Question of Classics **7.00** Countdown Top 10 of 1996 **8.00** World Opera **10.30** Howard's Week **12.00** Andre Leon **4.00-6.00am** Mark Griffiths.

Virgin Radio

1215, 1197-1260kHz MW 105.8MHz FM
6.00am Janey Lee Grace **10.00** Graham Dene **2.00** Bobby Hain **6.00** Lynn Parsons **10.00** Gary Davies **2.00-6.00am** Howard Pearce

World Service

648kHz LW
1.00am Newsdesk **1.30** Short Story **1.45** On the Move **2.00** Newsday **2.30** Anything Goes **3.00** News **3.15** Sports Roundup **3.30** Heritage **4.00** Newsdesk *4.30 Off the Shelf*: Web Central **4.45** Country Style **5.00** Newsday **5.30-6.00am** Composer of the Month

Satellite and Cable

SKY 1
6.00am Hour of Power (48610). **7.00** My Little Pony *(8635875)*. **7.25** Dynamo Duck *(6918900)*. **7.30** Deffy and His Friends *(69504)*. **8.00** Orson and Olivia *(36691)*. **8.30** Free Willy *(35962)*. **9.00** The Best of Geraldo *(71436)*. **10.00** Young Indiana Jones Chronicles *(65788)*. **11.00** Parker Lewis Can't Lose *(97726)*. **11.30** Real TV *(98455)*. **12.00** WWF: Superstars *(86184)*. **1.00** Star Trek *(62504)*. **2.00** Mysterious Island *(33691)*. **3.00** The New Adventures of Superman *(92271)*. **4.00** Kung Fu *(88078)*. **5.00** Great Escapes *(7523)*. **5.30** Muppets Tonight! *(3436)*. **6.00** The Simpsons *(4879)*. **6.30** The Simpsons *(7829)*. **7.00** Beverly Hills 90210 *(23639)*. **8.00** The New Adventures of Superman *(36977)*. **9.00** The X Files Reopened *(12523)*. **10.00** Millenium *(15610)*. **11.00** Manhunter *(66417)*. **12.00** 60 Minutes *(31382)*. **1.00** Civil Wars *(67382)*. **2.00-6.00am** Hit Mix Long Play *(95653)*.

SKY 2
7.00pm Xena: Warrior Princess *(1822726)*. **8.00** Melrose Place *(1802962)*. **10.00** Poltergeist: The Legacy *(1821097)*. **11.00** Seinfeld *(2139287)*. **11.30** Who Do You Do? *(5982349)*. **12.00** Film: Movers and Shakers (1985) *(2648566)*. **2.00-6.00am** Hit Mix Long Play *(8645030)*.

SKY MOVIES
6.00am Dreamer (1979) *(37252)*. **8.00** The Neptune Factor (1973) *(57271)*. **10.00** Freefall: Flight 174 (1993) *(49468726)*. **11.55** Octopussy (1983) *(64031748)*. **2.05** Other Women's Children (1993) *(969146)*. **4.00** Thunderball (1965) *(29068558)*. **6.10** Goldfinger (1964). James Bond faces one of his most dangerous assignments when he tangles with ruthless bullion smuggler Goldfinger and his deadly mute sidekick Oddjob. Tongue-in-cheek adventure, with Sean Connery, Gert Frobe and Honor Blackman *(94529788)*. **8.00** Hercules and the Amazon Women (1994). The mighty mythical hero sets out with his friend to rescue the residents of a small village from a gang of Amazonian women. Adventure, starring Kevin Sorbo, Anthony Quinn and Michael Hurst *(21271)*. **10.00** Judge Dredd (1995). Sci-fi thriller starring Sylvester Stallone, Armand Assante, Max von Sydow and Diane Lane *(853523)*. **11.40** The Movie Show *(644436)*. **12.10** Romeo Is Bleeding (1993) *(18701 1)*. **1.55** Love in the Strangest Way (1993) *(850276)*. **3.40-5.10am** New Eden (1994) *(86212363)*.

MOVIE CHANNEL
6.00am Tintin: The Seven Crystal Balls and Prisoners of the Sun (1987) *(4402417)*. **7.20** The Care Bears Movie II: A New Generation (1986) *(7125900)*. **8.40** Sherlock: Undercover Dog (1994) *(1850558)*. **9.55** The Man with the Golden Gun (1974) *(85496639)*. **12.00** Johnny's Girl (1995) *(45436)*. **2.00** The Spy Who Loved Me (1977) *(35784)*. **4.00** Rookie of the Year (1993) *(9504)*. **6.00** As Good as Dead (1995). Two women swap identities to allow one to use the other's medical insurance – but when events take a tragic turn, the remaining friend begins to realise there may be more to the situation than meets the eye. Thriller starring Traci Lords, Judge Reinhold and Crystal Bernard *(24368)*. **8.00** Circle of Friends (1995). A naive young woman leaves her small village home to attend university in 1950s Dublin, where her eyes are opened to city life by an old friend. Heart-warming romantic drama starring Chris O'Donnell, Minnie Driver and Colin Firth *(29813)*. **10.00** Le Colonel Chabert (1994). An officer returns home from the Napoleonic wars after being reported missing in action – only to find his wife using his fortune to advance the career of her second husband. French drama, starring Girard Depardieu, Fanny Ardant and Claude Rich *(147829)*. **11.55** There Goes My Baby (1994). Comedy drama set in 1965, following a group of soon-to-graduate college students as they prepare for life in the big, bad world. Starring Dermot Mulroney, Rick Schroder, Kelli Williams and Noah Wyle *(979320)*. **1.35** Hollywood Madam (1994) *(1930566)*. **3.05** A Dangerous Affair (1994) *(284450)*. **4.40-5.55am** Sherlock: Undercover Dog (1994) *(44053295)*.

SKY MOVIES GOLD
11.00am The Yearling (1946) *(9128 1233)*. **1.10** The Great Santini (1979) *(93471875)*. **3.05** The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956) *(58527146)*. **5.05** Patton (1970) *(61143542)*. **8.00** Cousins (1989). Ted Danson and Isabella Rossellini play cousins struggling against their own powerful mutual attraction while their respective spouses are having an affair. Sean Young, Lloyd Bridges and William Petersen co-star in this remake of the French romantic drama *(3563368)*. **10.00** Nico (1988). Steven Seagal stars as a tough cop with martial arts skills who uncovers a conspiracy involving the CIA, a drugs ring and government corruption. With Pam Grier and Sharon Stone *(9944558)*. **11.45** Betrayed (1988). Thriller starring Debra Winger, Tom Berenger and Betsy Blair *(38741691)*. **1.55** Julia (1977) *(3502943)*. **3.50** A Day's Pleasure (1919) *(86737092)*. **4.15-5.50am** Golden Earrings (1947) *(7827905)*.

UK GOLD
7.00am Record Breakers *(1567078)*. **7.30** Blue Peter *(1579813)*. **8.00** Animal Magic *(4225165)*. **8.30** Jackanory *(2013707)*. **8.45** Chigley *(2001962)*. **9.00** Survivors *(9580813)*. **10.00** Dr Who *(3082417)*. **1.20** Film: Carry on Girls (1973) *(68122146)*. **3.00** The Bill Omnibus *(61298287)*. **5.20** Going Straight *(2902875)*. **6.00** Bullseye *(8720455)*. **6.30** What a Carry On! *(8711707)*. **7.00** Dick Emery *(74736 10)*. **7.30** After the Show *(8700691)*. **8.00** Film: Madame Sousatzka (1988) *(55340349)*. **10.15** Boys from the Blackstuff *(91910287)*. **11.25** Spitting Image *(5800691)*. **12.00** Carrott Confidential *(2434585)*. **12.40** Film: Find the Lady (1976) *(34655382)*. **2.05-7.00am** Shopping at Night *(15796276)*.

SKY SPORTS 1
7.00am World Sport Special *(26813)*. **7.30** Cricket: Zimbabwe Vs England – Second Test – Live *(2631981)*. **3.00** Football: Southampton Vs Liverpool – Live *(6175078)*. **6.30** Basketball: Manchester Giants Vs Derby Storm *(595829)*. **9.00** Cricket *(256813)*. **11.30** Football Special *(244078)*. **2.00-4.30am** Basketball *(958092)*.

SKY SPORTS 2
7.00am Soccer Extra *(2308436)*. **11.00** Goals on Sunday *(2458726)*. **12.00** American Football: Wildcard Play Off *(7740356)*. **3.30** Ice Hockey *(7367726)*. **5.30** Trans World Sport *(9173349)*. **6.30** Football League Review *(9922165)*. **7.30** Angling Masters *(2608875)*. **8.30** Football Special *(8092707)*. **11.00** Olympics: Sprinters *(2439691)*. **12.00-1.00am** Cricket: Sporting Classics – West Indies Vs England 1994 *(6812740)*.

SKY SPORTS 3
12.00noon Football League Review *(43161233)*. **1.00** Darts: WDC World Championship – Live *(42877184)*. **5.00** World Sport Special *(41638368)*. **5.30** Drag Racing *(83311504)*. **6.00** Watersports *(43167417)*. **7.00** Darts: WDC World Championship - Live *(40157233)*. **11.30-12.00midnight** World Sport Special *(94866417)*.

EUROSPORT
7.30am Eurofun *(22748)*. **8.00** Alpine Skiing *(39813)*. **8.30** Alpine Skiing *(74320)*. **9.30** Offroad *(99097)*. **10.30** Alpine Skiing *(6394829)*. **11.45** Alpine Skiing *(4159504)*. **1.00** Tennis *(91639)*. **3.00** Alpine Skiing *(30455)*. **4.00** Ski-Jumping *(79558)*. **5.30** All Sports *(76252)*. **6.30** Olympic Games *(5813)*. **7.00** Figure Skating *(72207)*. **9.00** All Sports *(15146)*. **9.30** Olympic Games *(57707)*. **10.00** Formula One *(46504)*. **11.00-12.30am** Ski-Jumping *(85436)*.

LIVE TV
6.00am Revelations **6.30** Looking for Love **7.00** Spanish Archer **7.30** Mind and Body **8.00** Why Files **8.30** Video Box **9.00** Psychic Pets **9.30** Fashion **10.00** Revelations **10.30** Looking for Love **11.00** Campus Capers **11.30** Spanish Archer **12.00** Revelations **12.30** Why Files **1.00** Looking for Love **1.30** Psychic Pets **2.00** Fashion **2.30** Mind and Body **3.00** Canary Wharf Omnibus **4.30** Campus Capers **5.00** Revelations **5.30** Looking for Love **6.00** Fashion **6.30** Sunday Sport Live **7.00** Spanish Archer **7.30** Revelations **8.00** Psychic Pets **8.30** Why Files **9.00** Seventies Pop Show **9.30** Looking for Love **10.03** Sunday Sport Live **10.30** Stand-Up Live Special: Jim Bowen Presents Oh Cod! **11.30** Edenquest with Sandra Taylor **12.30** Kiss TV: Kiss Lifestyle **1.30** Home Shopping **2.00** Stand-Up Live Special: Mike Reid **3.00** Edenquest with Pamela Anderson **3.30-6.00am** Night-Time Programmes

TV/Regions

Serena Mackesy
In my week

There is a little crunch as the cartilage gives way. I concentrate on not grinding my teeth as he fits the earring. Then another crunch and a quick flash of blinding pain

"Sorry," says the girl behind the desk, "We only let people have two done at a time up there. There's a lot going on at that point and you might find it gets a bit heavy if you have more." She has gothic-black hair and a little hoop runs through her right nostril. She looks me hard in the eye and doesn't crack a smile. I think maybe she thinks I'm going to chicken.

I look back. "That's a shame. I really wanted three," I say. Take the clipboard and start filling in the form. It's one of those basic ones where you sign away blame in case of septicaemia and promise you're not prone to eczema, heart trouble, fainting and half a dozen other medical inconveniences. She turns away and addresses the woman beside me. "D'you want the stuff for keeping it clean?" she asks. The woman nods. George Michael is singing "Jesus to a Child" over the sound system. Lyrics like "Kindness in your eyes" don't really seem very appropriate here.

Girl dips beneath the desk, produces a bottle of antiseptic mouthwash. "You have to use this every time you eat, or drink, or smoke, and when you've been asleep," she says. "And no kissing or any other oral contact for at least six weeks." Woman nods, puts it in her coat pocket, leaves. She hasn't said a word.

Metal Morphosis is a body piercing shop in Soho. Any bit of your body, they'll stick a needle through and attach a surgical stainless steel ring to it. Sitting in the waiting room studying their price list, I feel like a bit of a weedy girlie. There, in ever-so-factual black and white, are all the places people commonly choose for spiking: nostril £35; septum £30; eyebrow £25; labret £35; nipple £25, both £40; navel £25; tongue £35. Then it gets weirder; bits of the body I've never heard of start popping up: madison; earl; nuchae. There's a half-page of things you could get done to your genitals. Involuntarily, I cross my legs. All I want is a couple of holes in the upper bit of my left ear. What a wuss.

It's early lunchtime; a small rush starts as I wait. A couple of people precede me and emerge with no visible signs of alteration. I peek at them from the corner of my eye. They don't seem to be having difficulty walking, either. The man who does the work appears at the mouth of the passage. He's huge; he looms over the room, a block of muscle in a white coat. "Have you," he says to girl behind counter, "got a five mil ball that's drilled all the way through?" "Dunno," she replies, "I'll have a look."

A trio of Australians want their noses done. Their friend, who already has hers, consults with reception lady. "Thing is, I think they put one in with a specially long wire or something. I can't get it out." "He can take it out for you." "Oh. I was hoping someone might be able to show me how to do it myself." "Well, we can't really show you. It's one of those things you have to teach yourself how to do. But he can take it out for you if you want. You'll have to pay, though."

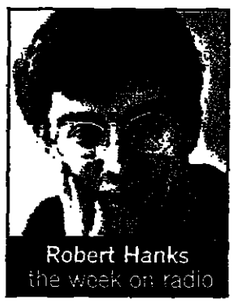
It's my turn. I follow the giant into a white-tiled, surgical-looking room filled with bits of sterile-looking metal and a doctor's couch. I start to tell him what I want, and he transfixes me with a glare. "Calm down," he says. I had been under the impression that I was perfectly calm. It's only a couple of needles through a cartilage, for god's sake. I've had a greenstick fracture of the upper arm: I know what pain is.

He gets out his iodine pen. Draws a couple of dots where I want the holes. "Now," he says, "turn your face to the wall and DON'T MOVE, right?" "Right," I grunt meekly. This is rather different from piercing last time around. When I was 13, you pretty much had to go through a psych test to ensure that you knew what you were doing, especially when you wanted repeat holes. The man who did mine almost fainted when I asked for the fourth. It took some persuasion back then to get anyone to do it without an anaesthetic, and you were loaded down with dire warnings about wearing anything other than gold for at least a year.

"Keep still," he says, and punches a needle through my ear. There is a little crunch as the cartilage gives way. I concentrate on not grinding my teeth as he fits the earring. Then another crunch and a quick flash of blinding red pain behind my eyelids. The ring seems very large as it pushes its way through.

"Okay," he says, "D'you want to go and have a look?" I skip from the couch. Dance around in front of the mirror. I have six earrings in my left ear. No-one's ever going to call me a wimp again. I spit on your stud-gun. "Oh, wow," I'm going. "Thank you. Thank you. I've wanted to have this done for ages. It's sooo cool." For a moment, he almost smiles. "Good," he says, "now can you go and look at it in the mirror outside? There's loads of people waiting."

Critical cheer? Bah, humbug!



Robert Hanks
the week on radio

Scene: Scrooge-like critic sits hunched and snarling over computer, straining to produce a coherent thought on Christmas radio, occasionally lashing out with hobnailed boot at offspring eager to show off new fairy outfit. Spectral figure appears beside him, moaning and clanking chains.

Critic: Buzz off. Can't you see I'm trying to get in touch with my muse? Slagging off radio programmes requires concentration.

Spectral figure: Actually, that's sort of why I'm here. I thought I could persuade you to say something nice about the radio.

Critic – Nice? Nice? When the *Today* programme's Personality of the Year poll is won by a man notorious for apparent absence of same and one of the runners-up is a woman whose sole claim to fame is that she once spent two minutes on the *Today* programme slagging off homosexuals? And when this non-fact becomes the main headline on the appallingly self-congratulatory and insular *Today* programme as well as the subject of lengthy analysis on *PM*? Nice, when Radio 2 can devote an hour on Christmas Day to Gloria Hunniford wandering around Julio Iglesias's Polynesian-style Florida home saying thing like "Crikey, that's an enormous sofa" and Julio replying "Yes, it's big enough to make love, Gloria"? Nice, when Mike Read can introduce a section from Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 on Classic FM with the line "Here's a word from Francis Drake" followed by a duck quacking? Anyway, what were you proposing?

SF: Well, the usual sort of thing – you know, Christmas past, Christmas present, Christmas future, you see error of ways, happy endings all round.

Critic: Sounds unlikely. Can we skip Christmas past and just talk about Radio 2's "Vintage Christmas" season of drama from the archives? To concede a point, I think most of that's been cracking stuff – especially Gielgud and Richardson doing Holmes and Watson on Boxing Day. Mind you, I was less sure about the 30-minute condensed version of *It's a Wonderful Life* on Christmas Day, with James Stewart recreating his screen role – I'd rather just watch the film. Also, I have had as much as I can stomach of Christmas present. Can we hit the future?

He is transported through the air to a dank, untended grave in a lonely corner of a graveyard. The name on the gravestone is "PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING".

Critic: You're not telling me they're going to sell off the BBC, are you?

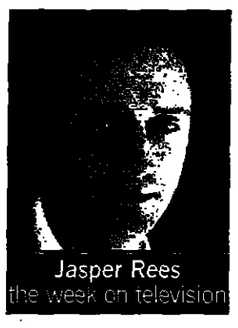
Spectral figure: Of course not – people would complain. They're just going to attenuate its budgets and dilute its distinctive products until it's utterly indistinguishable from commercial stations and becomes pointless. And the commercial stations don't have to bother competing any more, and they get even worse. Unless people like you defend the dear old BBC...

Critic: Hmm. Well, I suppose I am rather enjoying the serialisation of *The Old Curiosity Shop* they're doing on weekday mornings on Radio 4. They've tried to cut down on the sentimentality a bit, which is like trying to cut down on the tunes in Beethoven's Fifth, but Tom Courtenay is a rather excellent Quilp, the horrible dwarf who persecutes poor little Nell – it's the sense he conveys that Quilp has absolutely no conscience, and this liberates him and armours him. And it's the sort of project that only the BBC could do, which is becoming increasingly rare as it suffers more and more pressure to keep ratings up and budgets down. I could say that.

SF: That's more like it.

And the critic wakes up in his bed at home, resolved to send a turkey to Tiny Tim Bannister at the BBC with a note to the effect that this is in return for all the turkeys he's had from him. After all, no sense letting them think he's getting soft.

And the message is: get real



Jasper Rees
the week on television

You could tell it was Christmas week from the seasonal behaviour of ITV. The people's channel takes this whole goodwill business so seriously that it annually throws in the towel. They alone have learned that there is as much pleasure in giving as receiving. This year's present to the opposition involved stationing Anthea Turner on HMS Belfast. A clearer metaphor it would be hard to come up with. We're all at sea.

Elsewhere, while the church calendar celebrated the day God came down to earth, the television calendar did its best to bring the church down to earth. For **The Works** (BBC2, Fri), Mark Lawson cleverly went to Poland in search of "The Secret Life of the Pope". Lawson's burning quest down the years has been to uncover the way in which writers' lives inform their work. In the case of John Paul II, he wanted to find out if the playwright professed far more radical beliefs than those preached by the illiberal pontiff. And the answer is: does Karel Wojtyla have a balcony?

Two of his Holiness's fictional colleagues celebrated the Nativity in the traditional manner, with an hourlong special. You wonder whether the spirit of generosity had encouraged **The Vicar of Dibley** (BBC1, Wed) and **Father Ted** (C4, Tues), a pair of comedies about worldly priests with dunderheaded assistants, to go too far and invite each other to their Christmas script conferences. There was an almost supernatural symmetry of humour, including the twin gags about innocent children learning to say "wank", and the post-modern references to other television shows. "Who invented Christmas?" asked Dawn French's Reverend Grainger. "Noel Edmonds," opined a carol singer. It's all very well satirising Noel as seen on TV, but sitcom priests are part of the problem. The vicar of Dibley imagined a perfect Christmas evening watching *Jurassic Park* and *Only Fools and Horses*, which lo and behold – umpteen million viewers had just been tucking into on the same channel. And who's that taking the lugubrious dimwit role? Roger Lloyd Pack, much as he did an hour earlier in *Only Fools and Horses*. Father Ted's quotation from the schedules was a far more sophisticated dream sequence in which he had fallen in love with *Ballykissangel*'s Assumpta, the platonic squeeze of another TV priest. Wickedly funny.

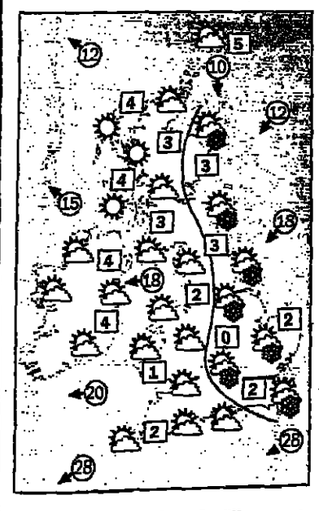
But thank God (if He's responsible) for the salutary dose of plain speaking in **The Real Christmas Show** (C4, Tues). Several revellers made a video of what happened in their households this time last year, and came back for tanked-up post-turkey analysis with Gaby Roslin, so much better at interviewing nonentities than celebrities. A bizarre exception to the show's realistic account of festive squabbles and drudgery was the Norfolk woman whose emotional investment in Christmas was so total that she yearned to dress her husband up as Santa Claus so she could wake up with him in the same bed. Her dream – and your nightmare – would be to have Christmas all the year round.

That was also Dickens's fantasy, which is why **An Audience with Charles Dickens** (BBC2, all week) was such a timely confection. The stories and passages – Nancy's murder, Scrooge's conversion etc – read by Simon Callow were the mass entertainment before television. All Victorians could remember what they were doing when they learned that Little Nell had died. (Reading *The Old Curiosity Shop*). We Elizabethans know where we were when we heard Raquel had left Curly. (Watching television.) These were basically radio shows in costume, with pride of place granted to the matted pubic drape glued to Callow's chin, but simply and delightfully done.

No one featured in *The Real Christmas Show* seemed to turn on the television at three o'clock. "It doesn't really interest me," said one of Her Majesty's subjects, "because it's just an old woman talking about nothing." This year ITV produced **The Queen** (BBC1 and ITV, Wed), but as with World Cup Finals and elections, viewers still turn to Auntie for those lapidary broadcasting moments. And if they didn't, it was probably because they were watching Rory Bremner's **Alternative Christmas Message** (C4, Wed) with the Princess of Wales and even more reflexive jokes about television. The script was far too detailed: mid-afternoon on 25 December, when the nation is at its least intelligent, is no time for real wit. The Queen's broad brushstrokes were easier on the ear after the stuffing most of us had given ourselves. As for most of the seasonal fare, the guest from *The Real Christmas Show* didn't miss much by emigrating to Turkey.

WEATHER

The British Isles



General Situation and 5-Day Outlook:

Pressure will remain high to the north of the country and low to the south. A small low will move south across Scandinavia.

Today, most of Scotland is going to be dry with sunshine, patchy cloud and light winds. However, one or two light showers can be expected on the east coast and over the Northern Isles. Northern Ireland should stay dry with sunshine and patches of cloud, but also a cool easterly breeze. Much of England and Wales is going to be dry with some sunshine. There will, though, be a cold northeast wind, and also a few snow showers to the east.

Cold northeast winds will affect most of the country on Sunday while sleet or snow spreads into the east, but with rain for the coast. Stronger northeast winds will turn it colder still on Monday, with some snow in the south and east. Little change is expected through Tuesday and Wednesday as bitterly cold northeast winds cover most of the country. Many places are going to see some snow, but the worst is likely to be to the southeast, with the best weather in the far northwest.

Aberdeen	f	4	39	Cardiff	r	4	39	Ipswich	sn	0	32	Oxford	c	3	37
Anglesey	s	7	45	Carlisle	fg	0	32	Isles of Scilly	s	6	43	Plymouth	c	4	39
Ayr	s	4	39	Dover	sn	0	32	Jersey	s	3	37	Ronaldsway	s	6	43
Belfast	fg	1	34	Dublin	s	3	37	Liverpool	s	5	41	Scarborough	sl	4	39
Birmingham	c	4	39	Edinburgh	s	3	37	Lizard	s	5	41	Southampton	cl	0	32
Blackpool	f	4	39	Exeter	c	2	36	London	c	1	34	Southend	c	0	32
Bournemouth	sl	1	34	Glasgow	s	3	37	Manchester	fg	1	34	Stornoway	sh	5	41
Brighton	sn	1	34	Guernsey	s	3	37	Newcastle	f	2	36	Tiree	s	6	43
Bristol	c	1	34	Inverness	f	1	34	Nottingham	f	4	39	York	s	3	37

Europe and The World

WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY, MIDDAY (GMT): c,cloudy; f,fair; fg,fog; hz,hazy; m,mist; r,rain; sn,snow; s,sunny; th,thunder *previous day's figure at local time.

Amsterdam	c	-3	27	Florence	f	0	32	*New York	c	1	34
Athens	c	7	45	Frankfurt	c	-8	18	Nice	c	6	43
Auckland	c	23	73	Geneva	sn	-6	21	Nicosia	f	21	70
Bangkok	s	30	86	Gibraltar	f	15	59	Paris	f	-3	27
Barcelona	c	7	45	Helsinki	sn	0	32	Prague	s	-13	9
Beirut	s	21	70	Hong Kong	f	21	70	Reykjavik	c	4	39
Belgrade	sn	-9	16	Istanbul	sl	1	34	*Rio de Jan	c	4	39
Berlin	f	-9	16	Jerusalem	s	20	68	Riyadh	s	24	75
Bombay	hz	28	82	Jo'burg	s	25	77	Rome	s	1	34
Brussels	c	-3	27	Kuala Lumpur	r	30	86	Singapore	r	28	82
Budapest	s	-8	18	Lisbon	s	10	50	Stockholm	sn	-1	30
*B'nos Aires	s	31	88	*Los Angeles	c	15	59	Sydney	sn	-1	30
Cairo	s	24	75	Madrid	s	5	41	Tenerife	s	23	73
Cape Town	f	25	77	Majorca	s	11	52	Tokyo	s	9	48
Casablanca	f	17	63	Malta	c	10	50	Venice	s	0	32
Christchurch	s	19	66	Melbourne	s	17	63	Vienna	s	12	54
Copenhagen	c	-3	27	*Miami	c	27	81	Warsaw	s	-13	9
Corfu	c	9	48	Moscow	s	-20	-4	*Washington	f	4	39
Darwin	c	28	82	Munich	s	-12	10	Wellington	s	21	70

AA Roadwatch

A406 Greater London. Between Henlys Corner (A1/A598) and Finchley (A1000 High Road), carriageway reduced to one lane between the A1 Falloden Way and Finchley High Road for major roadworks - regular delays. M1 West Yorkshire. J47 Leeds (M621/A653 Holbeck), long-term roadworks and lane closures with speed limits down to 30mph. Expect delays on the M1, M621 and Dewsbury Road. M27 Hampshire. Between J8 Southampton East (A3024 Windhover) and J10 Fareham (A32), long-term roadworks with a contraflow. A470 Merthyr Tydfil North of Cefn Coed, temp traffic lights on Brecon Road for major works. 40mph on A465 at Cefn Coed with temp lights on Aberdare Rd.

Out and about with AA Roadwatch call **0336 401** for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 39p per min (cheap rate) 49p per min (all other times) *inc VAT.*

Air Quality

Yesterday's Readings

	NO_2	SO_2
London	Mod	Good
S England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Mod

Outlook for Today

London	Good	Good
S England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Mod

The Sky at Night

Auriga, the Charioteer, is one of the conspicuous constellations well up in our skies in these winter evenings. Its brightest star, Capella, has a distinctly yellowish hue. Since Capella means "she-goat" in Latin, the little triangle of fainter stars nearby are familiarly known as "the kids". The Milky Way arches across the sky through Auriga and its adjacent constellations of Perseus and Gemini. A sweep along this part of the Milky Way with even a very modest pair of binoculars will reveal a number of star clusters. Five in particular, just on or below the threshold of naked eye visibility are worth looking for. The 18th century French comet-seeker, Charles Messier, listed them as numbers 34 to 38 in his famous catalogue of bright nebulae, star clusters and galaxies. These so-called open clusters are typically several thousand light years away. Each contains several hundred stars born at the same time, between 50 and 200 million years ago.

Jacqueline Mitton

Sun and Moon

Sun rises 8:06am
Moon sets 9:47am
Moon rises 8:02pm
Sun sets 3:58pm
New moon: January 9

Lighting-up Times

London	3:58pm	to	8:06am
Bristol	4:08pm	to	8:16am
Birmingham	4:01pm	to	8:18am
Manchester	3:56pm	to	8:25am
Newcastle	3:45pm	to	8:32am
Glasgow	3:50pm	to	8:48am
Belfast	4:05pm	to	8:46am
Tomorrow			
London	3:59pm	to	8:06am
Bristol	4:09pm	to	8:16am
Birmingham	4:02pm	to	8:18am
Manchester	3:57pm	to	8:25am
Newcastle	3:46pm	to	8:32am
Glasgow	3:51pm	to	8:48am
Belfast	4:06pm	to	8:46am

	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	3.30	6.7	16.00	6.7
Liverpool	0.55	9.0	13.10	8.9
Avonmouth	9.05	12.5	21.25	12.1
Hull (Albert Dock)	8.15	7.0	20.15	7.0
Greenock	2.33	3.4	14.32	3.6
Dun Laoghaire	1.15	3.9	13.30	3.9

In The Independent next week

Horribilis and hype? A year in the life of Pammy and Irvine Welsh

The big picture

White Hunter, Black Heart
Sat 8.30pm C4

If Clint Eastwood the monolithic actor rarely surprises – Eastwood the director is another kettle of fish altogether. *In his 1990 movie White Hunter, Black Heart*, Eastwood got inside the skin of a movie director that he obviously has a lot of understanding of and sympathy with – John Huston. This is a lightly fictionalised account of what happened when Huston (here called John Wilson) went to Africa to make *The African Queen* and got waylaid hunting elephants.

Television preview

Recommended viewing this weekend

by Gerard Gilbert

AFI Clint Eastwood Tribute Sat 7.10pm C4
The Restless Year Sat 8.55pm BBC2
Women at Play Sun 7pm C4
Just Dancing Around? Sun 7.30pm C4
The Moonstone Sun 9pm BBC2
Richard Wilson Way Out West Sun 9pm BBC1

I think they've found a way of getting to Clint Eastwood. You don't send a posse of horse-riding, baccy-chewing desperados after him – or some crazed psycho street punk. No, you sit him down in the midst of an audience of his Hollywood peers and you get them to say nice things about him. Clint Eastwood's Achilles heel is his embarrassment, and you've never seen someone squirm like our man in the **AFI Clint Eastwood Tribute** (Sat C4), part of tonight's *Clint Night* on Channel Four.

As far as theme nights go, *Clint Night* is a bit thin – consisting of the above programme (a bit cheesy, but they include all the great clips), a rather silly sounding debate about who was the greatest – Clint or John Wayne – an episode of *Rawhide* (which Channel 4 shows on Sunday mornings, anyway) and a couple of his movies. There doesn't seem to be any peg for it except that BBC2 is having a theme evening tonight – its excuse being the 40th anniversary of the BBC's Natural History Unit.

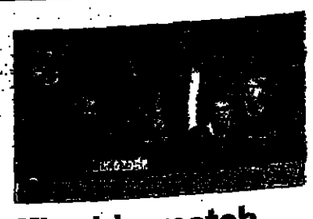
The centrepiece of this affair is a programme called **The Restless Year** (Sat BBC2), in which the four seasons in the Cotswolds countryside are captured using time-lapse photography. My personal highlight was the sight of a marrow growing at this exaggerated speed, but on the whole the result is strangely dull. I think we're all too used to this time-lapse business.

Also a bit of a disappointment is the BBC's canny combining of costume and detective dramas in a two-part adaptation of Wilkie Collins's **The Moonstone** (Sun BBC2). Maybe the problem is with Collins's source book, which I haven't read but of which I have heard many excellent things. On this evidence, the dramatisation is very much sub-Conan Doyle.

The moonstone of the title is a large diamond stolen by a British army officer from a Hindu temple. The priests of this sacred building are very keen to get it back – and indeed turn up disguised as travelling jugglers on said army officer's descendents' Yorkshire doorstep with that very intention. But did they steal it from heiress Keeley Hawes's dressing-table drawer? Enter Antony Sher hamming it up rotten as the detective on the case. They ought to give him a series. Only, just as long as they don't give Richard Wilson a series to make further films in the likeness of **Way Out West** (Sun BBC1), in which the star of *One Foot in the Grave* is sent along to a working cattle ranch in Wyoming, USA to see if they can't make a cowboy out of him. They can't.

Women at Play (Sun C4) exchanges its usual Thursday night slot for a Sunday one and takes a look at the women involved in the casino gaming business – as punters and as croupiers – and then further up the hierachy. Apparently, more and more women are taking to gambling at roulette and blackjack – attracted by the tightly regulated (and therefore unthreatening) world offered by casinos.

Just Dancing Around? (Sun C4), Channel 4's short series in which film-makers spy on the creative processes of a leading international choreographer, has director Mark James on former avant-garde "doyenne" (ie she's over 60) Trisha Brown. James's film finds Brown embarking on a new piece entitled *MO*, a typically fluid and inventive creation set to Bach's *Musical Offering*.



The big match

Southampton v Liverpool
Sun 3pm, Sky Sports 1

I'm not entirely convinced by Liverpool yet – they need a truly world-class striker in Stan Collymore's position for starters – but they have come a long, long way from the traumatic days when Graeme Souness tried major surgery on that hallowed institution, the Anfield boot room. Souness at the Dell is another matter – someone of his ilk was needed in the manager's dugout. They also need Matthew Le Tissier – at least if the Saints' recent poor run without their striker is anything to go by.

Saturday television and radio

BBC 1

7.05 The Pink Panther *(R) (1829393)*. 7.25 News and Weather *(5447645)*.
7.30 Children's BBC: Iznogoud. 7.40 Speed Racer. * 8.05 The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest. * 8.30 The New Adventures of Superman. * 9.15 Almost Live, Definitely Kicking.
10.50 Dannii Minogue's Circus of the World *(S) (5947664)*. 11.40 The World's Strongest Man *(S) (2863515)*. * 12.12 Weather *(9822747)*.
12.15 Grandstand. 12.20 Football Focus. 1.00 News. 1.05 Racing from Newbury. 1.25 Athletics: Coverage Of The County Durham International Cross-Country. 1.40 Racing from Newbury. 1.55 Athletics. 2.15 Racing from Newbury. 2.30 Women's Skiing: Slalom highlights from Semmering, Austria. 2.40 Racing from Newbury. 3.00 Women's Skiing. 3.15 Motor Sport: Review of the British Touring Car Championship. 3.55 Football Half-times. 4.00 Athletics 4.40 Final Score *(S) (45539190)*.
5.20 News and Sport *(6656935)*. * 5.30 Regional News and Weather *(258867)*. 5.35 Tom and Jerry *(760664)*.
5.45 The Simpsons. Marge auditions for a part in an amateur dramatics musical. Bliss *(S) (967480)*. *
6.10 Gotcha Hall of Fame. Noel Edmonds plays practical jokes on Ulrika Jonsson, Wayne Sleep, Judith Chalmers and various other minor celebrities. Have a nap or something *(330799)*.
7.00 Lenny Henry Gets Wild. Lenny Henry does some comedy routines and meets Boyzone in Dublin and racing driver Nigel Mansell in Exeter *(S) (516577)*.
7.50 The National Lottery Live. Cuddly Dale Winton returns as host, joined by pop group Right Said Fred. Remember them? *(S) (232747)*. *
8.05 Casualty. A sex offender's release from prison stirs up a community, while Gloria makes a shocking discovery about Richard *(S) (285916)*. *
8.55 News and Sport (Followed by *Weather*) *(983916)*.
9.14 National Lottery Update *(868867)*.
9.15 [BBC] **Death Train** (David S Jackson 1993 UK/Cro). Anglo-Croatian co-production, which means that all the extras were very, very cheap, and starring a pre-Bond Pierce Brosnan as a mercenary hired by a Russian general to transport a nuclear device across Europe and deliver it to Saddam Hussein. Christopher Lee and *Baywatch*'s Alexandra Paul help out *(S) (82234206)*. *
10.50 Match of the Day. Newcastle United v Tottenham Hotspur is the main event *(S) (7274428)*. *
12.05 They Think It's All Over. As shown over Christmas *(R) (S) (2806523)*. *
12.35 Top of the Pops. Review of 1996 repeated from Christmas Day *(R) (S) (5662287)*. *
1.40 [BBC] **The Ipcress File** (Sidney J Furie 1965 UK). Modishly flashy but still enjoyable spy shenanigans with Michael Caine reprising his Harry Palmer role, ably supported by droll Gordon Jackson and Nigel Green in his hunt for a missing scientist *(348417)*.
3.25 Weather *(41821962)*. *To 3.30am.*

BBC 2

6.55 In Search of Genghis Khan *(5081393)*.
7.45 [BBC] **Song of Norway** (Andrew L Stone 1970 US). Insipidly pretty biopic of the Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, throwing together Toralv Maurstad, Harry Secombe, Robert Morley, Edward G Robinson on one film set *(18924799)*.
10.05 [BBC] **To Be or Not to Be** (Ernst Lubitsch 1942 US). A group of Polish actors, led by Jack Benny and Carole Lombard (in her last movie – she was killed in a plane crash two weeks after completion), outwit the Nazis in this agreeable wartime propaganda comedy *(49173916)*.
11.40 The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures. Five new lectures, and the theme this year is fossils and evolution. In the first lecture, Professor Simon Conway Morris takes the audience through a billion years of geological history *(S) (3935157)*. *
12.40 Star Trek: 30 Years and Beyond. Coverage of a special gala held in September, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the popular sci-fi series and movie spin-offs *(R) (9610374)*. *
1.30 [BBC] **Ben-Hur** (William Wyler 1959 US). You might have seen Gore Vidal the other month, claiming that he injected homo-eroticism into the scenes between Charlton Heston and his boyhood friend Stephen Boyd. Vidal was one of the many screenwriters who worked on this mammoth MGM toga-wearing epic – most famous for the slave galley scenes and the chariot race *(2753225)*. *
4.55 TOTP2 *(S) (1578515)*.
5.40 Ready, Steady, Cook *(S) (698848)*.
6.10 Natural History Night. David Attenborough introduces an evening of wildlife programmes to mark the 40th anniversary of the Natural History Unit at the BBC. See *Preview (133119)*. *
6.15 Namib: Strange Creatures of the Skeleton Coast. From *The World about Us* in 1976, a look at the wildlife of the harsh but strikingly beautiful Namib Desert in Africa *(R) (894119)*. *
7.15 Malice in Wonderland. Life on a Red Sea coral reef. Deadly for some *(R) (494916)*. *
7.50 Kingdom of the Ice Bear *(828913)*. *
8.55 The Restless Year. See *Preview (S) (440916)*. *
9.50 On the Tracks of the Wild Otter. From the 1982 series of *The Natural World*, Hugh Miles's film follows the lives of otters living on the storm-washed islands of Shetland *(R) (133683)*. *
10.20 Attenborough in Paradise. New Guinea is the paradise in question *(R) (9410596)*. *
11.30 The Most Popular BBC Wildlife Programme. Viewers get to vote on the "best BBC wildlife programme of all time". Go on, then, name three BBC wildlife programmes *(13480)*. *
12.00 [BBC] **Cat People** (Jacques Tourneur 1942 US). Imaginative and atmospheric low-budget horror movie, scaring by suggestion. Simone Simon plays the beautiful Yugoslav girl who turns into a cat when her emotions are aroused. Tom Conway is the shrink who thinks she's fantasising *(1827900)*.
1.10 Weather *(9024962)*. *To 1.15am.*

ITV/London

6.00 GMTV *(7469225)*. **9.25** Cartoon Time *(R) (3762003)*.
9.35 [FILM] **Daffy Duck's Fantastic Island** (Friz Freleng 1983 US). Feature-length cartoon *(3334867)*.
10.50 [FILM] **Bedknobs and Broomsticks** (Robert Stevenson 1971 US). So-so Disney live action and animation mix, with witch Angela Lansbury, boyfriend David Tomlinson thwarting Nazis in wartime London *(85751616)*. *
1.00 News *(82700190)*. 1.05 Local News *(82709461)*. *
1.10 [FILM] **The Bionic Showdown** (Alan Levi 1989 US). Bionic Man Lee Majors joins forces with the one and only Bionic Woman Lindsay Wagner to track down some spies endangering world peace. A young Sandra Bullock pays her dues *(60483393)*.
2.45 [FILM] **Arthur II: On the Rocks** (Bud Yorkin 1988 US). Disappointing sequel with Dudley Moore's cuddly playboy going broke as his wife Liza Minnelli wants to adopt a child. John Gielgud appears as a ghost, but this is essentially two duds for the price one *(S) (719374)*. *
4.45 News and Results (Then *Weather*) *(8325664)*. *
5.05 London Tonight and Sport (Followed by *Weather*) *(8419138)*. *
5.20 Cartoon Time *(6641003)*.
5.30 Sabrina the Teenage Witch *(138)*. *
6.00 Gladiators *(S) (61428)*. *
7.00 Blind Date *(S) (9157)*. *
8.00 The Joe Pasquale Show. The comic, whose only trick seems to be that he talks in a squeaky voice, gets his own show – aided and abetted by guests Sacha Distel, Eric Sykes, Gloria Hunniford and boy band OTT. It's that old-fashioned, down-home variety show, folks *(S) (204041)*. *
8.50 News (Followed by *Weather*) *(988461)*. *
9.04 Local Weather *(857751)*.
9.05 [FILM] **The War of the Roses** (Danny DeVito 1989 US). Bracingly black domestic comedy starring Michael Douglas as a smug Washington lawyer who has nauseated his wife (Kathleen Turner) to the point of divorce. Danny DeVito is the lawyer supervising the ferocious battle over their possessions *(S) (19170645)*. *
11.10 [FILM] **The Woman in Red** (Gene Wilder 1984 US). Happily married Gene Wilder gets an eyeful of Kelly LeBrock and won't rest until he has her underneath the duvet. Inexplicably successful romantic comedy co-starring Gilda Radner and Charles Grodin *(963515)*. *
12.45 Funny Business *(S) (3700981)*.
1.20 [FILM] **Portrait of a Hit Man** (Allan Buckhantz 1977 US). Assassin Jack Palance is hired by mobster Rod Steiger – only to find that his target is an old friend who once saved his life *(550165)*.
2.55 Entertainment '96 *(R) (8943962)*.
3.50 Helter Skelter *(1384959)*.
4.40 [FILM] **Great Expectations** (Jean Tych 1983 US). Animated version of the Dickens novel *(9269368)*.
5.55 News *(1175981)*. *To 6.00am.*

Channel 4

6.05 All-Terrain Marathon Christmas Special *(S) (4715428)*.
7.00 The Magic School Bus *(R) (S) (67799)*.
7.30 Really Wild Animals *(1773480)*.
7.55 Hong Kong Phooey *(R) (4765848)*.
8.05 King Arthur and the Knights of Justice *(R) (7947206)*.
8.35 Hang Time *(S) (6507480)*.
9.00 The Morning Line *(S) (9474138)*.
9.50 Cycling: The 1996 World Track Championships. From the Manchester Velodrome. Britain's Chris Boardman takes part *(9086585)*.
10.50 Blitz! *(S) (6356751)*.
11.50 Rawhide *(1734913)*.
12.50 [FILM] **Phantom of the Opera** (Rupert Julian 1925 US). Rarely seen silent adaptation of Gaston Leroux's classic story about a mysterious masked figure who haunts the sewers beneath the Paris Opera House. Starring Lon Chaney, Mary Philbin and Norman Kerry *(S) (68702312)*.
2.35 [FILM] **Journey to the Centre of the Earth** (Henry Levin 1959 US). Pat Boone and James Mason lead the way through the earth's crust in this solid and entertaining version of the Jules Verne tale *(29543428)*. *
5.00 Brookside Omnibus *(S) (79672119)*. *
6.35 News and Weather *(183374)*.
6.40 Clint Night: Introduction. An evening of programmes dedicated to Clint Eastwood. See *Preview, above (465480)*.
6.41 The Greatest: Clint Eastwood. Who is king of the western – Clint Eastwood or John Wayne? This light-hearted showdown intends to compare the legendary actors, asking whether Eastwood's "Man with No Name" or The Duke's confident gunslinger made the ultimate screen cowboy *(S) (411409)*.
7.10 AFI Clint Eastwood Tribute. See *Preview, above (S) (7217480)*. *
8.30 [FILM] **White Hunter, Black Heart** (Clint Eastwood 1990 US). See the *Big Picture (S) (97070409)*. *
10.35 [FILM] **Hang 'Em High** (Ted Post 1967 US). Hollywood's first attempt to emulate the spaghetti western has our man Clint as a convicted gunslinger, setting out to gain a bloodthirsty revenge on the nine-man mob who lynched and left him for dead *(50242886)*. *
12.40 Rawhide *(4066504)*. *
1.40 [FILM] **Side Street** (Anthony Mann 1950 US). Rather grim tale of poor clerk Farley Granger committing a petty crime in an effort to make ends meet, and then finding the snowballing consequences beginning to take over his life, Cathy O'Donnell co-stars *(2881078)*.
3.10 [FILM] **Johnny Eager** (Mervyn LeRoy 1941 US). Underworld melodrama with one or two original twists as rich girl Lana Turner falls for paroled mobster Robert Taylor. Van Heflin won the acting honours as Taylor's perpetually drunk "chum" (there are homosexual overtones) *(611981)*.
5.05 Mr Don and Mr George *(1187078)*. *To 5.35am.*

ITV/Regions

ANGLIA
As London except: 1.04pm Anglia Air Watch *(82700190)*. **1.10 Film:** Murder in Three Acts *(60483393)*. **5.04** Anglia Air Watch *(6670515)*. **5.05** Anglia News and Sport *(8419138)*. **12.45am Film:** The World is Full of Married Men *(101252)*. **2.25am** Carnal Knowledge *(8232320)*. **3.25am Film:** Eleni *(609146)*. **5.25-5.55am** Hell and High Water: the Making of Cutthroat Island *(1177691)*.

CHANNEL 3 NORTH EAST/YORKSHIRE
As London except: 1.10pm Film: Murder in Three Acts *(60483393)*. **5.10** *Channel 3 North East: Full Time (5713138)*. *Yorks:* Scoreline *(5713138)*. **9.04** *Yorks:* Local Weather *(857751)*. **11.10** *The Making of Moll Flanders (615770)*. **11.40** Laffs at the Baths *(228428)*. **12.10am Film:** The Woman in Red *(505225)*. **1.45am** Funny Business *(58788)*. **2.15am Film:** Jack of the Bushveld *(942558)*. **4.10am** Pushing the Limits: The Making of Eraser *(47951900)*. **4.40-5.55am Film:** Melody Time *(9269368)*.

CENTRAL
As London except: 1.10pm Film: Murder in Three Acts *(60483393)*. **5.05** Central News *(6679886)*. **5.10-5.20pm** The Central Match – Goals Extra *(5713138)*.

HTV
As London except: 1.10pm Film: *Murder in* Three Acts *(60483393)*. **5.05** HTV News and Sport *(8419138)*. **12.45am Film:** The World is Full of Married Men *(101252)*. **2.25am** Carnal Knowledge *(8232320)*. **3.25am Film:** Eleni *(609146)*. **5.25-5.55am** Making of Cutthroat Island *(1177691)*.

MERIDIAN
As London except: 1.10pm Film: Ernest Saves Christmas *(60483393)*. **12.45am Film:** The World is Full of Married Men *(101252)*. **2.25am** Carnal Knowledge *(8232320)*. **3.25am Film:** Eleni *(609146)*. **5.25-5.55am** Making of Cutthroat Island *(1177691)*.

WESTCOUNTRY
As London except: 1.10pm Film: Murder in Three Acts *(60483393)*. **12.45am Film:** The World is Full of Married Men *(101252)*. **2.25am** Carnal Knowledge *(8232320)*. **3.25am Film:** Eleni *(609146)*. **5.25-5.55am** Making of Cutthroat Island *(1177691)*.

S4C
As C4 except: 6.05am Early Morning: All-Terrain Marathon Christmas Special *(4715428)*. **7.00** The Magic School Bus *(67799)*. **7.55** Hong Kong Phooey *(4765848)*. **8.05** King Arthur and the Knights of Justice *(7947206)*. **11.50** Home to Roost *(8958409)*. **12.55pm** Slot Maithrin *(9268003)*. **1.25** Happy Prince *(2954436)*. **2.00** Faust *(2741480)*. **5.20** Brookside *(55470480)*. **7.00** News *(980374)*. **7.15** Noson Lawen *(3458799)*. **8.20** Gadael Garthewin *(571225)*. **9.05** Lon Goed *(279799)*. **9.35** Clint Night: The Greatest: Clint Eastwood *(864041)*. **10.05** AFI Life Achievement Award *(1027157)*. **11.25-1.30am Film:** White Hunter, Black Heart *(15950041)*.

Radio

Radio 1
[illegible]
7.00am Kevin Greening **10.00** Dave Pearce **1.00** Jo Whiley **4.00** John Peel. Festive 50 – Part 3 **7.00** Danny Rampling. Lovegroove Dance Party **9.00** Rap Show **12.00** Reggae Dancehall Nite **2.00** Essential Mix. Rhythm Masters **4.00-7.00am** Clare Sturgess

Radio 2
[illegible]
6.00am Mo Dutta **8.05** Brian Matthew **10.00** Steve Wright **1.00** Arthur Smith's Amusing Bits **1.30** Smith and Jones Sound Off **2.00** Judy Spiers **4.00** Nick Barraclough **5.00** Simon and Garfunkel Story **6.00** Rod Stewart in Concert **7.00** Half a Sixpence **9.30** David Jacobs **10.00** Arts **12.05** Charles Nove **4.00-6.00am** Mo Dutta

Radio 3
[illegible]
6.55am News Headlines, Weather. **7.00** Record Review
9.00 Building a Library. David Nice compares available recordings of Mahler's Symphony No 7.
10.15 Record Release. Villa-Lobos: Bachianas Brasileiras No 4 – Prelude; Danzas Afro-Cubanas; Piazzolla: Bandoneon Concerto
11.15 Reviews. Stephen Plaistow listens to piano recordings which have recently made it on to CD for the first time.
12.00 Private Passions. Housewife superstar Dame Edna Everage talks about her musical passions. See *Choice, above*
1.15 News. Vintage Years. Paganini: Caprice No 13 in B flat. Sarasate: Zapateado. Mozart: Divertimento in E flat, K563. Schubert: Piano Trio in B flat, D898. Brahms: Piano Trio No 1 in B, Op 8. Gluck: Melodie.
3.15 The Finishing Touch. A postgraduate student at the Royal Academy of Music, plays Beethoven's Sonata in E minor, Op 90. Is pianist James Gibb.
4.00 Bach Harpsichord Concertos. Bach: Concerto in C minor for Two Harpsichords, BWV1063; Concerto in D minor for Three Harpsichords, BWV1063; Concerto in C for Two Harpsichords, BWV1061
5.00 Jazz Record Requests.
5.45 The Gonzaga Court.
6.30 Live from the Met: *Hansel and Gretel*. The evergreen fairy-tale opera by Engelbert Humperdinck, live from New York. Sung in English
8.55 John Updike. Reads his own short story, *New York Girl*.
9.30 Piano Circus. Playing on full-size grand pianos, the six members of Piano Circus perform music commissioned from six contemporary composers: Julia Wolfe, Juliet Palmer, John Metcalf, Jane Gardner, David Lang and Graham Fitkin. Introduced by John Metcalf.
11.05 New York Cabaret. Robert Cushman reviews the 7th Annual Convention, held at Town Hall, Manhattan, and picks the best from among the hundreds of songs and performers.
1.00 Through the Night.
6.00-7.00am Sequence.

Choice

Sexual ambiguity abounds: a specially extended edition of **Private Passions** (12noon R3) is devoted to the impeccable musical tastes of Dame Edna Everage (*left*); and the **Kaleidoscope Feature** (7.20pm R4), "Golden Years" looks over the career of David Bowie, about to celebrate his his 50th birthday.

Radio 4
[illegible]
6.00am News.
6.10 Farming Today.
6.50 Prayer for the Day.
7.00 Today. Presented by Ben Geoghan and Sue MacGregor.
9.00 (LW) Test Match Special. Live coverage from Harare of day three of the Second Test, with Peter Baxter, Henry Blofeld and Simon Mann.
9.00 (FM) News.
9.05 (FM) Sport on 4.
9.30 (FM) Breakaway.
10.00 (FM) Loose Ends. With Ned Sherrin.
11.00 (FM) Close Shaves. On average, a man spends the equivalent of 139 days of his life shaving. A humourous look at this age-old ritual, from the complete head shave to beards.
11.30 (FM) From Our Own Correspondent Special. A compilation of highlights from the series.
12.00 (FM) Grand Tour. Tangiers. Writer Paul Bowles talks about the city which he has called home since the 1940s.
12.25 (FM) News Quiz of the Year. Simon Hoggart looks back over the best moments from the comedy quiz. (2/2).
12.55 Weather.
1.00 News.
1.10 (FM) Our Next Question Please.
1.10 (LW) Test Match Special. Further coverage from Harare.
1.55 Shipping Forecast.
2.00 (LW) Test Match Special.
2.00 (FM) Fishing Hotel. James Naughtie checks into the Lochmaddy Hotel on North Uist, where all the residents are fishing-mad, and tries his hand angling for sea trout with the local policeman.
2.30 Saturday Playhouse: *The Nutcracker Christmas*. In Nicholas McInerny's festive drama, young Muscovite Natalia is unable to attend the Christmas ballet at the Bolshoi. But with the help of her grandfather, she discovers that the Nuttracker Suite can be brought into her own home... courtesy of some Christmas decorations and a bit of imagination. With Bernard Hepton and Stella Gonet.
4.00 Making History.
4.30 Ad Lib.
5.00 Garrison Keillor's Radio Preachers.
5.40 An Elf at Christmas. American humorist David Sedaris reads extracts from his diary.
5.55 Shipping Forecast.
6.00 Six O'Clock News.
6.25 Year Ending. .
6.50 Those Cafe Days. Simon Parkes reports from Paris on whether the cafe tradition has a chance of surviving into the next century. (1/5).
7.20 Kaleidoscope Feature. As David Bowie prepares to celebrate his 50th birthday, Kaleidoscope profiles the musical chameleon. See *Choice, above*.
7.50 On These Days.
8.50 Saturday Night Theatre: *Paupers and Pig Killers*. A dramatisation of the diary of Somerset parson William Holland. (3/3).
9.35 Classes with Kay.
9.50 Ten to Ten. Tony Benn talks to Richard Coles about his faith.
10.00 News.
10.15 Newsgate Calendar. By Christopher Denys. The story of the impressionable young girl who poisoned her father out of love for notorious gold-digger, Captain Cranstoun.
11.15 Kiri. Dame Kiri Te Kanawa tells June Knox-Mawer about the advantages of fame and the honour of working with Leonard Bernstein on the definitive recording of West Side Story.
11.45 Uncle Mort's Celtic Fringe. By Peter Timniswood. Carter Brandon continues his journey through Wales in the company of his Uncle Mort. With Stephen Thorne, Sam Kelly and Christian Rodska.
12.00 News.
12.30 The Late Story: *The Gift of the Magi*. By O Henry.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00-6.00am As World Service.

Radio 5
[illegible]
6.05am Dirty Tackle **6.30** Breakfast **9.05** Kershaw and Whittaker **11.05** Top Gear **11.35** The Game's Up **12.05** Baker and Kelly Upfront **1.05** Sport **6.06** Six-O-Six **8.05** The Treatment **9.05** Dallyn UK **10.35** Word Up! **11.00** Night Extra **11.35** Tales of the Turf **12.05** Night Talk **2.00** Up All Night **5.05-6.00am** Spotlight 96

Classic FM
[illegible]
6.00am Sarah Lucas **9.00** Countdown of 1996 **12.00** Gardening Forum Christmas Special **1.00** Alan Mann's Junior Packed Lunch **4.00** Nick Bailey **7.00** Russian Revelation **8.00** Evening Concert **10.00** Quentin Howard's Six of the Best Christmas Special **12.00** Andre Leon **4.00** The Travel Guide 1997 Holiday Preview **5.00-6.00am** Michael Fanstone

Virgin Radio
[illegible]
6.00am Janey Lee Grace **10.00** Jeremy Clark **2.00** Mark Forrest **6.00** Lynn Parsons **10.00** Richard Porter **2.00-6.00am** Howard Pearce

World Service
[illegible]
1.00am Newsdesk **1.30** Quote... Unquote **2.00** Newsday **2.30** People & Politics **3.00** News **3.15** Sports Roundup **3.30** Music Review **4.00** Newsdesk **4.30** Short Story **4.45** On the Move **5.00** Newsday **5.30-6.00am** In Praise of God

Satellite

SKY 1
7.00am My Little Pony *(8731003)*. **7.25** Dynamo Duck *(6021428)*. **7.30** Dolly and His Friends *(99312)*. **8.00** Orson and Olivia *(73799)*. **8.30** Free Willy *(65770)*. **9.00** The Best of Sally Jessy Raphael *(78916)*. **10.00** Designing Women *(62770)*. **10.30** Murphy Brown *(52206)*. **11.00** Parker Lewis Can't Lose *(94206)*. **11.30** Real TV *(95935)*. **12.00** WWF *(83664)*. **1.00** The Hit Mix *(92312)*. **2.00** Hercules *(70799)*. **3.00** The Lazarus Man *(99751)*. **4.00** WWF *(18886)*. **5.00** Pacific Blue *(4138)*. **6.00** America's Dumbest Criminals *(1157)*. **6.30** Just Kidding *(2409)*. **7.00** Hercules *(20119)*. **8.00** Coppers *(39867)*. **9.00** Cops *(19003)*. **10.00** Unsolved Mysteries *(12190)*. **11.00** The Extraordinary *(96225)*. **12.00** The Movie Show *(84900)*. **12.30** The Fifth Corner *(75338)*. **1.30** The Edge *(60558)*. **2.00-6.00am** Hit Mix *(29233)*.

SKY 2
7.00pm Earth 2 *(1928954)*. **8.00** JAG *(1904374)*. **9.00** VR5 *(1924138)*. **10.00** Tales from the Crypt *(7700022)*. **10.30** Tales from the Crypt *(7719770)*. **11.00** Hit Mix *(134284 8)*. **12.00** Film: Seven Days in May (1964) *(2671894)*. **2.00-6.00am** Hit Mix *(8758558)*.

SKY MOVIES
6.00am Kid Galahad (1962) *(34732)*. **8.00** Flipper (1963) *(54751)*. **10.00** Family Reunion (1995) *(75645)*. **12.00** The NeverEnding Story III: Return to Fantasia (1994) *(44374)*. **2.00** Son of the Pink Panther (1993) *(28215)*. **3.50** Live and Let Die (1973) *(53646138)*. **6.00** The NeverEnding Story III: Return to Fantasia (1994) *(23206)*. **8.00** Hercules and the Lost Kingdom (1994) *(2875 1)*. **10.00** The Puppet Masters (1995 *(53004)*. **11.50** Prelude to Love (1995) *(5715 77)*. **1.20** Natural Causes (1994) *(7051851)*. **2.50** Ed McBain's 87th Precinct: Lightning (1995) *(8367165)*. **4.15-5.50am** Kid Galahad (1962) *(81542)*.

MOVIE CHANNEL
6.00am TinTin: The Lake of Sharks (1972) *(4403799)*. **7.25** Breakout (1984) *(1667225)*. **8.30** Treasure Island (TVM 1974) *(57022)*. **10.00** Another Midnight Run (1994) *(74886)*. **11.30** Moonraker (1979) *(64637747)*. **1.35** A View to a Kill (1985) *(73424886)*. **4.00** Spring Fling! (1995) *(68768138)*. **5.50** Licence to Kill (1989) *(27069596)*. **8.00** Muriel's Wedding (1994) *(26393)*. **10.00** The Last Seduction (1994) *(538683)*. **11.50** Full Eclipse (1993) *(107157)*. **1.30** Digital Man (1994) *(429981)*. **3.05** Freaked (1993) *(8597639)*. **4.35-5.50am** TinTin: The Lake of Sharks (1972) *(44087252)*.

SKY MOVIES GOLD
4.00pm The Lost Continent (1968) *(8260312)*. **6.00** The Buddy System (1984) *(365775 1)*. **8.00** Spymaker: The Secret Life of Ian Fleming (1990) *(3669596)*. **10.00** Beetlejuice (1988) *(8231041)*. **11.40** Birdy (1984) *(2748848)*. **1.40** Love with the Proper Stranger (1963) *(4828271)*. **3.25-4.55am** Rancho Notorious (1952) *(79463523)*.

SKY SPORTS 1
7.00am Racing News *(23393)*. **7.30** Cricket: Zimbabwe Vs England – Live *(1250190)*. **3.30** Sports Saturday *(23157)*. **5.30** NHL: Power Week *(88664)*. **6.30** Ice Hockey: Sheffield Steelers Vs Nottingham Panthers – Live *(6977511)*. **9.00** Cricket *(554732)*. **12.00** Rugby Union Update *(23900)*. **2.00-4.30am** Ice Hockey *(470726)*.

SKY SPORTS 2
7.00am Soccer AM *(2404664)*. **11.00** Hold the Back Page *(2554954)*. **12.00** Sports Saturday *(8232080)*. **2.00** Rugby Union: Harlequins Vs Leicester – Live *(6094596)*. **4.30** High 5 *(3120935)*. **5.00** Squash *(1210799)*. **6.00** World Sport Special *(3141428)*. **6.30** Futbol Mundial *(3125480)*. **7.00** Skiff Sailing *(1211428)*. **7.30** Rugby *(928204 1)*. **9.30** Surfing *(4193683)*. **10.30** High 5 *(1742596)*. **11.00** Darts *(2555799)*. **11.30-1.00am** Football: World Cup Classics *(3706206)*.

SKY SPORTS 3
12.00noon Skiff Sailing *(17650026)*. **12.30** High 5 *(43288954)*. **1.00** World Motor Sport *(429733 12)*. **5.00** NFL American Football – Live *(40273225)*. **9.30** Rebel Sports *(43268190)*. **10.00** Squash *(41654119)*. **11.00-12.00midnight** Watersports World *(60259885)*.

LIVE TV
6.00am Revelations **6.30** Looking for Love **7.00** Spanish Archer **7.30** Mind and Body **8.00** The Why Files **8.30** Video Box **9.00** Psychic Pets **9.30** Fashion **10.00** Revelations **10.30** Looking for Love **11.00** Mind and Body **11.30** Spanish Archer **12.00** Campus Capers **12.30** The Why Files **1.00** Looking for Love **1.30** Psychic Pets **2.00** Fashion **2.30** Mind and Body **3.00** Video Box **3.30** Pin Money **4.00** Saturday Sport **4.30** Saturday Sport **5.30** Seventies Pop Show **6.00** Fashion **6.30** Psychic Pets **7.00** Spanish Archer **7.30** Revelations **8.00** Bushido **8.30** Bushido **9.00** The Why Files **9.30** Looking for Love **10.03** Saturday Sport **10.30** Stand-Up Live Special: Mike Reid **11.30** Edenquest with Pamela Anderson **12.30** Kiss TV: Kiss Lifestyle **1.30** Home Shopping **2.00** Stand-Up Live Special: Freddie Starr **3.00-6.00am** Night-Time Programmes

John Lewis

John Lewis combined distinct and original gifts as a typographer and as a converter and sailor of small boats, and enjoyed a long life in which he was able to run both careers together in singularly happy combination.

He was Welsh on both sides of the family, born at Rhoose on the west side of Cardiff overlooking the Bristol Channel in 1912. His father was a bank manager who would rather have been a doctor; very soon he became a soldier. Surviving the First World War, he was in his element at Farnham, in Surrey, where the family moved in 1920. From there his son went to Charterhouse where in the "Studio", like Osbert Lancaster before him, he acquired a taste and considerable aptitude for drawing.

His father wanted him to be a doctor, so he obediently went to Bart's. This was not a success, and he moved to Deptford to study art at Goldsmiths' under Rowland Hilder, who also awoke his passion for ships and the sea; among his fellow-students was Denton Welch.

In 1935 he set up as a freelance illustrator, and was doing fairly well when war broke out. This he spent in camouflage, a neglected art between the wars that had to be revived. It took him to Canada (posted to the far north, he pointed out that ten feet of snow was no training ground for Europe and transferred to the greens and browns of British Columbia) and Italy, where he spent a brief but enjoyable time on "secret devices". It also brought him in contact with like-minded friends: Victor Stiebel, Oliver Messel, Gabriel White and his brother-in-law Ted Ardizzone, Freddy Mayor of the Mayor Gallery, Basil Spence, Blair Hughes-Stanton and Lynton Lamb.

It was Larry Lamb, most gentle but also perceptive of men, who gave Lewis's post-war career its direction. As they were pondering the future, he said to Lewis: "As you have illustrated books and collected books all your life, why don't you design them – it means knowing about typography, about printing and book-binding. If you could manage it, the best thing would be to go and work with a printer and a bookbinder." James Gardner, also in camouflage, who had made Puffin Books a household word, provided the necessary introduction to W.S. Cowell Ltd of Ipswich. Geoffrey Smith, a good and generous man, full of enthusiasm, was anxious to move the firm into printing more substantial books than Puffins. For Lewis, this meant learning on the job. Together, he and Cowell's taught each other.

The first product was *A Handbook of Printing Types* (1947), at once a manual and a showcase of Cowell's resources, notably in the technique, still new for books, of photo-lithography. It had a striking jacket showing the title as printer's type in a composing stick resting (or so it seemed) on Speed's map of Suffolk. Armed with this, Lewis enlarged his portfolio, making friends with Barnett Freedman and Henry Moore. "Plastocowell", a new process that encouraged artists to work on film that could be directly transferred to lithographic film, resulted in commissions to Braque, Matisse and others; Lewis went to Golfe Juan in the South of France to persuade Picasso to join in, a wholly happy experience that he never forgot. It also brought work designing print and even opera productions for the newly established Aldeburgh Festival.

The great advantage of Ipswich was its proximity to navigable waters, and, after settling with his wife Griselda at Manningtree, Lewis lost no time in acquiring and converting his first serious boat, a 26-foot former lifeboat. He became something of an expert on conversion and published two books on it, with his friend and fellow-sailor Adlard Coles. More of his professional time was spent in London, with Cowell's a reliable ground-bass to an increasingly wide range of activities.

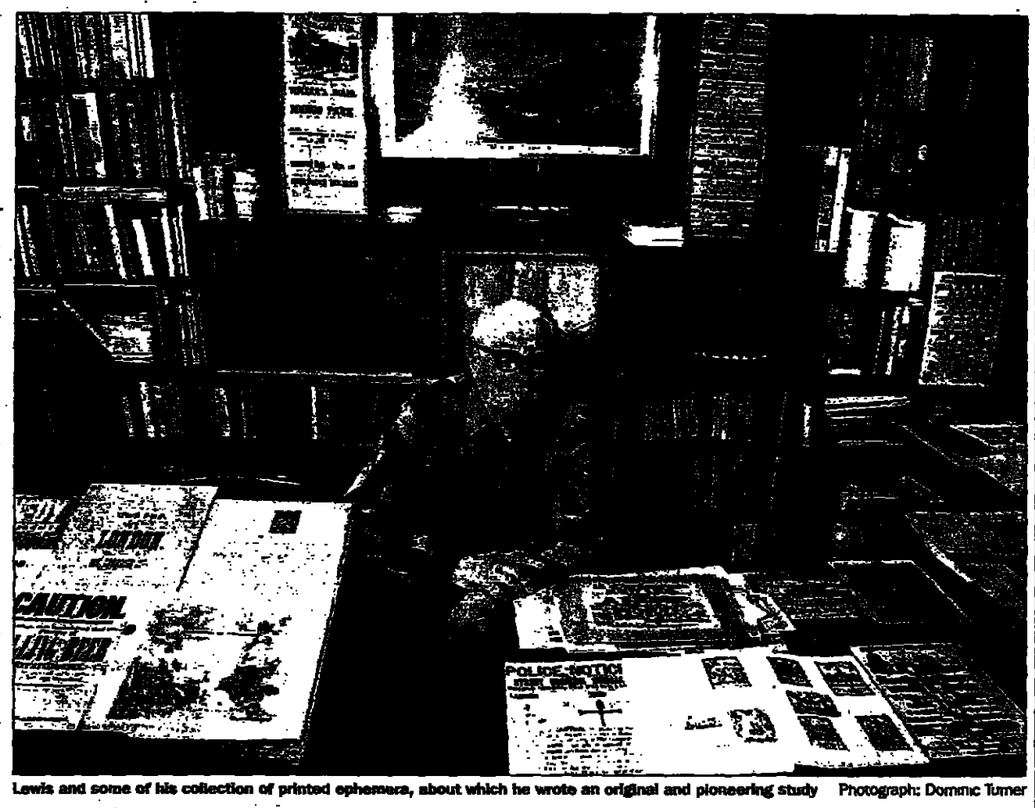
From 1951 to 1963 he taught at the Royal College of Art under Robin Darwin. His students all benefited from his warmth and encouragement, and with one in particular, David Gentleman, it led to a long-lasting and fruitful association. He also founded the College's Lion and Unicorn Press, producing some 25 handsome and original publications, in part designed and all produced by the students.

In many ways his most original and permanently influential publication was *Printed Ephemera* (1962). This arose from the chance acquisition from an Ipswich bookseller of a huge blank-book in which a large number of single sheets, including a 15th-century Indulgence and the rare 1757 specimen of the famous Birmingham printer John Baskerville, had been pasted by a former owner. The quest for the origin of these and the many other pieces led Lewis to ponder on their sources, on what made them different from more substantial printed matter. This led him to pursue and collect these then unconsidered trifles with a zeal and method that made *Printed Ephemera*, when it came out, a pioneering study, not merely an anthology. The section on sailmakers' needlepackets (a natural product of his nautical interests) was a model of its kind.

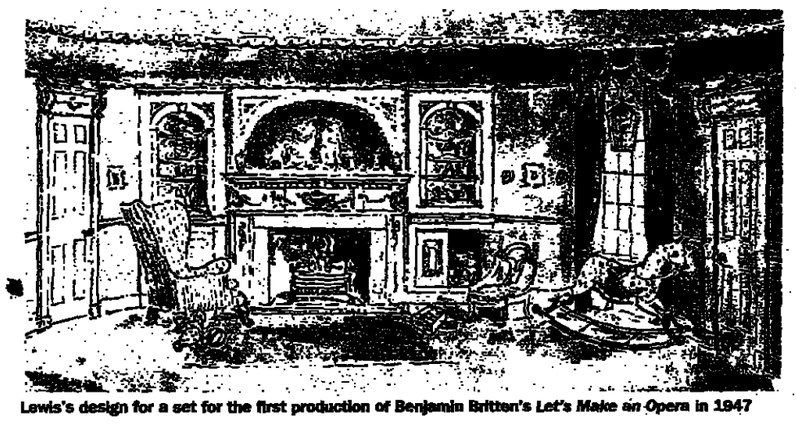
John Lewis continued lively and productive, and his autobiography, *Such Things Happen*, was only published (by Unicorn Press) in 1994. Not tall, but strongly built, with a ruddy complexion and a fine mane of hair, latterly white, he was a warm-hearted and sympathetic friend to all who came his way. He found it easy to talk to anyone in his melodious voice, with a touch of his Welsh forebears' lilt, and was the best of company on any occasion. Both as a creative designer and the commissioner of work by other artists, he left a definite mark on the graphic scene in his time which will not grow stale, its vitality a tribute and memorial to his own.

Nicolas Barker

John Lewis, typographer, illustrator, boat designer and sailor: born Rhoose, Glamorgan 11 December 1912; married 1940 Griselda Rideout; died Woodbridge, Suffolk 22 December 1996.



Lewis and some of his collection of printed ephemera, about which he wrote an original and pioneering study Photograph: Dominic Turner



Lewis's design for a set for the first production of Benjamin Britten's *Let's Make an Opera* in 1947

Tristan Keuris

The Dutch composer Tristan Keuris was a big man in all senses: over six foot tall, with a crop of long hair, and a lived-in face; and he was big enough in his art to choose a path which he believed in, regardless of current fashion or dogma.

Like many composers in the late 20th century, he was open to all the possibilities of the century, and took advantage only of those which helped him write what he had to. His individual mixture of tonal and atonal material created a particular forward thrust in his music: harmonic tension was always present, and this, combined with a strong rhythmic impetus, kept not only the audience but also the players constantly involved.

Keuris was born in 1946, and as a teenager studied music in his home town of Amersfoort with Jan van Vlijmen. In 1963 he entered the Conservatoire in Utrecht, where his composition teacher was Ton de Leeuw, and he graduated with the Composition Prize in 1969.

He stayed on as a teacher after graduation, refining a musical language where tonality was important, although his training from both van Vlijmen and de Leeuw had been in the then prevalent serial tradition. Keuris always had his doubts about this: "It's not that I'm against atonality," he said once, "but I don't know how to build large-scale pieces with it."

So it is not surprising that his first important piece, the *Sinfonia* of 1972-74, was a profoundly tonal work. It won the Matthijs Vermeulen prize in 1975, and established Keuris's name on the international scene. Its example inspired many composers in the Netherlands, as did Keuris himself, with his continuing commitment to teaching: after his first stint at Utrecht, he taught at the Hilversum Conservatory, the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, and at the time of his death was head of composition back in Utrecht. He loved teaching theory and analysis as much as composition.

After the success of the *Sinfonia*, Keuris was regularly in demand for commissions; the list includes the Houston Symphony Orchestra and the BBC. In 1991 he was chosen as the Dutch composer in "Arturo Toscanini", a multiple commission from the Orchestra Sinfonica dell'Emilia-Romagna, which presented new works from all the countries of the EU.

As he developed, his musical language became richer and deeper. Keuris was never dismissive of other styles, but knew the way he had chosen was right for him. He always believed that music must actively communicate, and convince the listeners emotionally. Just as he had not rejected tonality, neither did he reject conventional forms: in fact, he became more attached to them as time passed.

The *Symphony in D*, which he completed in 1995, is a culmination of this process: not only is its title provocative in its naming of a key, but its formal processes are much more concerned with the mainstream symphonic tradition.

Certainly, before his final short illness he felt he was at the height of his powers, and that he had found a way to communicate his musical thoughts in the fullest possible way. At the time of his death he was working on a song cycle based on the poems of Rilke, for the distinguished Dutch mezzo Jard van Nes – in 1990, he had written one of his most beautiful works, the *Three Michelangelo Songs* for her.

Keuris was only an intermittent visitor to Britain, latterly for the much delayed British premiere of his *Concerto for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra* in 1994, but thanks to the healthy state of Dutch culture much of his music has appeared on LP and CD, most recently the *Symphony in D* and the *Second Violin Concerto* – still to receive its first public performance.

Martin Cotton

Keuris: harmonic tension

Tristan Keuris, composer: born Amersfoort, the Netherlands 3 October 1946; married (two children); died 15 December 1996.

Michael Bruno

Michael Bruno will be remembered as the economist behind the 1985 stabilisation plan, which brought Israel's annual rate of inflation down in one year from a horrendous 400 per cent to a manageable 20 per cent.

Although there were elements of monetarism in his strategy, he was neither doctrinaire nor conservative. Fellow practicitioners defined his approach as "heterodox" rather than "orthodox". He took what he, and his country, needed from different schools of economics.

Bruno's strength as an economics professor who abandoned academia for the compromised world of politics was his inventiveness. He had a rare skill for marrying theory with practice, a talent for explaining his ideas to non-economists and selling them to his political masters.

The anchor of his programme was a fixed exchange rate, since many Israeli prices were linked, formally or informally, to the dollar. This was accompanied by drastic cuts in the state budget, backed by high rates of interest and a freeze on wages and prices. Real interest rose to 20-30 per cent, which Bruno later admitted was too drastic even in an emergency.

After serving as economic adviser to the Finance Minister, Yitzhak Modai, Bruno was appointed governor of the Bank of Israel in 1986 when Labour's Shimon Peres was Prime Minister in a national-unity coalition. Although he was identified with the Labour movement, the subsequent Likud Government pressed him to stay on when his term expired in 1991. Instead, he joined the World Bank as chief economist, a post in which he continued until a few months before his death from bone cancer.

At the Bank of Israel, he was respected as an open-minded, if outspoken governor. "People felt a strong attachment to him once they knew him," a former colleague said. "He had no stomach for intrigues between departments. His decisions were always to the point. Personality didn't come into it. He read the material. He worked a lot at home. He listened very attentively."

Michael Bruno was born in Hamburg in 1932. His German Jewish family moved to Palestine a year later after Hitler rose to power. Bruno came to England to read Mathematics and Economics at Cambridge, then took a doctorate at Stanford in California.

Back in Israel, he worked at the Bank of Israel from 1957 to 1963, when he joined the Economics department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was appointed to the Carl Melchior chair of international economics in 1970 and was awarded an Israel Prize, his country's highest honour for scholastic or artistic achievement, in 1994.

After returning to Jerusalem from Washington earlier this year, knowing that his condition was incurable, Bruno threw himself bravely into the task of upgrading his old university's department of economics into a semi-independent school with new funding. He hoped he would have time to help restore some of its waning reputation.

Politically, Bruno was on the left of Israeli politics, defined in terms of attitude towards the Arab neighbours, rather than the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. He was among the founders of the Peace Now movement in 1978 and was active in both its demonstrations and its inner counsels. In advance of the 1981 general election, Bruno persuaded the Labour Party to write into its platform that it did not want Israel to go on ruling another people.

He inherited the German Jew's love of music and the arts, attending concerts until shortly before his death. He was married twice, and is survived by both wives and by two sons and a daughter from his first marriage.

Eric Silver

On three occasions in 1955-56, writes **Tam Dalyell**, Michael Bruno came to Scotland to stay in my home during the Christmas and Easter vacations, when returning to Israel was too difficult and expensive. At that time, he was an engineer-turned-economist graduate, who had been sent to King's College, Cambridge on the recommendation of Don Patinkin, Professor of Economics at the Hebrew University.

We had the privilege of being supervised together by Harry Johnson, Nicky Kaldor, Robin Marris and Joan Robinson. Bruno's particular interests were trade cycle theory, as outlined by Roy Harrod and Michael Kaletsky, and underdevelopment, especially the work of Professor Ragnar Nurkse – both subjects of great importance to Israel at that time.

Bruno was a workaholic by nature, which trait was reinforced by a tremendous sense of obligation to his fellow countrymen in Israel, who had made his further education possible. He once summed it up: "You cannot quite understand, here in Britain, when I tell you that I have to work to contribute to the very survival of my country." He was also a real believer in manual work. Once when he was staying in Scotland a cattle grid was needed; he instantly offered to build it, and did, with me as his labourer.

At Christmas 1956, I was invited to stay with his parents at their home in Haifa. Michael was away, as he often was, doing part of his military service in the Negev. Dr Bruno, his father, told me of the circumstances which he believed had contributed to the formation of his son's outlook on the world. A grateful patient in his medical practice in Hamburg had summoned him to his house late at night on the pretext of an emergency call on behalf of his infant daughter. "When I arrived, he said it was not Greta who was ill, let alone in danger – 'It is you and your family. I have Nazi connections, but am grateful to you - get out of Hamburg tomorrow!' " Mercifully, as Michael Bruno said later: "We took the hint and survived – many of my parents' friends did not and were to perish in the Holocaust."

Having scrambled to Palestine, Dr Bruno confirmed that the apocryphal story of new builders passing bricks to one another, "*danke, Herr Lehrer*", "*danke, Herr Zahnarzt*", "*danke, Herr Professor*", was literally true in his case. He had built houses when he first arrived.

Michael Bruno's childhood was spent partly at the Kibbutz of Guivat Brenner. His younger brother, Danny Bruno, a tough Kibbutznik, took me to the Nahal Kibbutz at Revivim in the Negev Desert. This had been one of the more inhospitable spots on the face of the planet. Michael Bruno joined us. Morale was extremely high. The place exuded comradeship. Ashkenazi (German-born) Brunos and Sabra (from the word for prickly pear, used to describe Kibbutz-born) Israelis got on famously: "There is nothing like coping with adversity for creating real contentment."

When my wife Kathleen and I in 1991 spent an evening at Michael Bruno's home, when he had become an extremely influential central banker nationally and internationally, he was still the same person; "coping with adversity" was what Michael Bruno's life was all about.

Michael Bruno, economist: born Hamburg 30 July 1932; married 1958 Ofra Hanoch (née Hirshenberg, marriage dissolved; two sons, one daughter), Netta Ben-Porat; died Jerusalem 25 December 1996.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line. VAT extra.

Appointments

Mr Adrian Charles Smith, to be a circuit judge, assigned to the Northern Circuit.

Mrs Sarah Anne Williams, to be a full-time chairman of Social Security Appeal Tribunals, Medical Appeal Tribunals, Disability Appeal Tribunals and Child Support Appeal Tribunals.

Mr Patrick Talbot QC and **Ms Sonia Proudman QC**, to be Benchers of Lincoln's Inn.

The Earl of Lichfield, to be Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Staffordshire.

Inner Temple

The following have been elected Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple:

Mr Justice Keith; Judge Weeks QC, Mr Michael Spencer QC; Mr Roderick Denyer QC; Miss Geneva Cass QC; Mr Victor Temple QC; Mr Richard Plender QC.

Changing of the Guard

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. Nijmegen Company, Grenadier Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

TODAY: Mr Intikhab Alam, former Pakistan cricketer, 55; Mr Lew Ayres, actor, 88; Mr Terry Butcher, footballer, 38; Mr William Camps, former Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, 86; Mr Donald Carr, cricketer, 70; Sir Ellis Clarke, former president, Trinidad and Tobago, 79; Major Madeleine Craggs, secretary, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 51; Mr Thomas Gould VC, 82; Mr Max Hastings, editor-in-chief, the London *Evening Standard*, 51; Mr Roy Hattersley MP, 64; Mr Noel Johnson, actor, 80; Mr Nigel Kennedy, violinist, 40; Mrs Frances Morrell, former leader, ILEA, 59; Sir Patrick O'Connor, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 82; Mrs Bridget Prentice MP, 44; Mr Simon Raven, author and playwright, 69; Mrs Joan Ruddock MP, 53; Dame Maggie Smith, actress, 62; The Right Rev William Westwood, former Bishop of Peterborough, 71; The Hon Geoffrey Wilson, former chairman, Delta plc, 67.

TOMORROW: June, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, musical director and conductor, 83; Mr Andrew Bache, ambassador to Denmark, 57; Sir Richard Beaumont, former diplomat, 84; Lord Beaverbrook, former chairman, Beaverbrook Foundation, 45; Mr John Connell, former chairman, the Distillers Co, 72; Mr Bernard Cribbins, actor, 68; Baroness Denton of Wakefield, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Northern Ireland, 61; Miss Marianne Faithfull, singer and actress, 50; General Sir Robert Ford, former governor, Royal Hospital, Chelsea, 73; Professor Laurence Gower, former Vice-Chancellor, Southampton University, 83; Mr David Hall, former chief constable of Humberside, 66; Mr Roger Hart, ambassador to Angola, 53; Sir Simon Hornby, President, Royal Horticultural Society, 62; Mr Terry Lewis MP, 61; Miss Mary Tyler Moore, actress, 59; Mr Martin Offiah, rugby player, 30; Mr Iain Paxton, rugby player, 39; Mr Peter Robinson MP, 48; Mr Alan Rusbridger, editor, the *Guardian*, 43; The Right Rev Mark Santer, Bishop of Birmingham, 50; Sir Kenneth Sharp, chartered accountant, 70; Mr Harvey Smith, show-jumper, 58; Mr Jon Voight, actor, 58; Sir Edward Stratten Williams QC, former judge, 75.

Anniversaries

TODAY: **Births:** Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th US president, 1856; Philip Wilson Steer, artist, 1860; St John Greer Ervine, playwright and dramatic critic, 1883; Earl "Fatha" Hines, jazz pianist, 1905. **Deaths:** St Francis de Sales, 1622; Queen Mary II (of William and Mary), 1694; Rob Roy (Robert Macgregor), clan chief, 1734; Thomas Babington Macaulay, first Baron Macaulay, author and statesman, 1859; George Robert Gissing, novelist, 1903; Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, engineer, 1923; Maurice Joseph Ravel, composer, 1937; Victor Emmanuel III, former King of Italy, 1947; Jack Lovelock, athlete and surgeon, killed 1949; Paul Hindemith, composer, 1963; Sam Peckinpah, film director, 1984. **On this day:** Westminster Abbey was dedicated, 1065; Spain recognised the independence of Mexico, 1836; in the United States, the first patent for chewing gum was issued, 1869; the world's first public film show took place in Paris, 1895; Messina, Sicily was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake, when over 150,000 lives were lost, 1908; the independence of Estonia was proclaimed, 1917; the Irish Free State became the Republic of Ireland, 1937; Ahmen Soekarno was elected president of the Indonesian Republic, 1949. **Today is the Feast Day of St Antony of Lérins.** The Holy Innocents (Childermas) and St Theodore the Sanctified.

TOMORROW: **Births:** Jeanne-Antoinette, Marquise de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV, 1721; Charles Macintosh, chemist and inventor of waterproof clothing, 1766; Charles Goodyear, inventor of vulcanised rubber, 1800; William Ewart Gladstone, statesman, 1809; Alexander Parkes, chemist, inventor of a second method of vulcanising rubber, 1813; Pablo Casals, cellist, 1876; Vera Mary Brittain, author, pacifist and feminist, 1893; Klaus Emil Julius Fuchs, Soviet spy, 1911. **Deaths:** St Thomas à Becket, murdered 1170; Jacques-Louis David, painter, 1825; William Crotch, composer, 1847; Christina Georgina Rossetti, poet, 1894; Rainer Maria Rilke, poet, 1926; Donald Robert Perry Marquis, journalist and humorist, 1937; The Earl of Stockton (Harold Macmillan), statesman, 1986. **On this day:** the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London, opened, 1720; Sarah Siddons, as Portia, made her first appearance on the London stage, 1775; Texas became the 28th of the United States, 1845; the massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, took place, when 200 Sioux Indians were killed, 1890; Radio Luxembourg started operating, 1930; the City of London was the subject of a fire-bomb raid, 1940; the magazine *Life* ceased publication, 1972. **Today is** the Feast Day of St Ebrulf or Evroult, St Marcellus Akimetes, St Thomas of Canterbury and St Trophimus of Arles.

Lectures

TODAY

Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Post Modernism", 1pm.

TOMORROW

Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Post Modernism", 2.30pm.

Children need the Bible's melodrama

Meanings of Christmas

The Rev Andrew Spurr argues that Bible stories must be allowed to frighten and disturb us. Sentimentality merely inoculates children against real faith and mystery.

As if life isn't tough enough already when you're five, Jamie was told one day after school that he had been cast as an angel in the nativity play. He announced this with dignified restraint, as he stood in the hallway wearing his favourite Liverpool away strip, quietly smouldering at the prospect of having to exchange it for public humiliation in tights, tinsel and feathers.

It wasn't until the following Saturday morning that the idea for his rescue came to me. We were watching cartoons which came, one after the other, with the same storyline: always our heroes, against all odds, engaged in a death-defying struggle to thwart some archetypal power-crazed evil character poised to destroy the world. They were in fact apocalyptic. The next time Jamie mentioned the dreaded event I told him the stories of Michael and the dragon in the sulphurous lake, and of Daniel's vision of the messenger with fiery torches for eyes. These angels in their indigenous habitat, apocalyptic, caught Jamie unawares and, in his imagination, he said they seemed more like Gladiators. Once he had provided the key, it was a short step to the day when he was able to stride on stage and bellow "Fear Not" with all the force and attitude of the Wolf-man, and no hint of the traditional Good Fairy anywhere in sight.

If Jamie had been granted a flash of insight, mine was to dawn more slowly. Days later, as I browsed the children's Bibles in the local bookstore, I realised they were all the same: David, Goliath, wise men, shepherds, fishermen, loaves and fishes, and an angel who looked almost indecently innocent. No stars falling out of the sky, earthquakes, rivers of blood, and certainly no angels on horseback. It was as if 4,000 years of religious vision and imagination had been taken on by Enid Blyton, and Enid Blyton had won. The churches, desperate to retain their influence, have been co-conspirators in this inoculation of a weak representation of faith into children which has rendered them immune to the real thing when they get to an age when life starts to bite back. Then we wonder why our young abandon church at the age when they experience the mini-apocalypse of their hormones kicking in.

Yet Matthew's tale is an ominous dream-directed narrative with more terror than joy. Joseph's dreams suspend the dread of his fiancée's infidelity, anticipate the hoofbeats of Herod's horses, and prompt the safe time to return from hiding. The child whom he protects is silent at the centre of this dark tale; we know little other than that he has escaped. Who is this child: who can inspire such protection in Joseph, awe in the astrologers, hatred in Herod? Behind him is a grisly trail of carnage as the hopes of parents for the future are destroyed. The viciousness withdraws leaving the eerie wail of Rachel, symbol of motherhood, crying out into the darkness, her head back baying at the moon for all time.

Luke offers an enchanting tale set against the backdrop of Imperial Rome. A young woman in an occupied country, engaged to a descendant of an indigenous folk-hero, is visited by an angel of war who announces that her child will assume the throne of the nation. Her assent initiates a course of events more powerful than she can imagine.

In the meantime, the elderly, who have kept vigil for a new day, are rewarded by their own annunciation. Zechariah is told he will be the father of a son by a wife as old as Sarah's laugh. He is struck mute, and at the birth of his son he will sing.

Who is this child, who is quietly at the centre of all this enchantment, where barren women and virgins conceive, angels direct events; and Mary's heart, where all these things are treasured, is promised a sword?

These stories are filled with fear and awe. They point to a life which will later have even more danger and wonder than surrounded its birth. When we neglect to introduce them to our children, they are denied the chance to see real power at an age when their capacity for dread and enchantment is at its keenest. The opportunity evades them to trust that the hand of God is present when they are amazed, or when their life is shattered by tragedy.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Peace on Earth, but not enough goodwill

Let's start with the optimism. The world is at peace this Christmas, or most of it is anyway. There are no inter-state battles underway and though there are plenty of civil conflicts, there probably have been fewer wars this year than at any time for decades. Dozens of small-scale and very violent conflicts have flared, it is true; but Bosnia has not gone back to war, Russia has not disintegrated, China has not gone to war over Taiwan, the conflicts of southern Africa are waning, and the long guerrilla wars of central and south America seem to be unwinding.

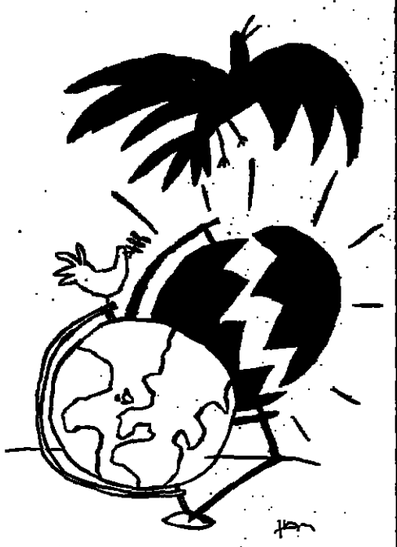
There are plenty of reasons why conflict is at a low ebb. The main one is the evaporation of the Cold War, the historic 50-year-long struggle between Russia and America. That has left the US, like Britain at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, as the sole power that is able to exert its influence wherever and whenever it wants.

Since Immanuel Kant and Adam Smith, liberals have hoped that trade and investment would bring perpetual peace by making every state more familiar and inter-dependent with its neighbours in a family of nations. As anyone who has just spent two days locked inside with their nearest and dearest will testify, familiarity and proximity do not always help to ensure harmony. But there is some truth in this idea: the European Union and regional trading blocks around the world are removing barriers and bringing countries closer together in the pursuit of greater material wealth.

But it is at this point in the argument that the optimism pales. We do not have a single formula for perpetual peace, and (like Tolstoy's unhappy families) all wars are unalike, with widely varying causes which are not susceptible to a single answer. There are plenty of reasons to think that, viewed historically, this Christmas is about as peaceful as humanity gets. The next 12 months may well be more violent than the last. The world is less prone to war, but there is not a lot of goodwill around; as City analysts would put it, downside risks abound.

The Middle East is the main cause for concern. As in Northern Ireland, a peace process has bloomed and then wilted. It is now in great danger of fading altogether. There is little goodwill between the Palestinians and the Israelis since the election of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened to destroy the Oslo process.

The Gulf, too, is a volatile place with both Iraq and Iran unhappy at the status quo and eager to disrupt the US-led regional framework that emerged in an ad hoc way from the Gulf War. And the coalition behind the



United States in the region is as shaky as ever, as demonstrated yesterday by France's decision to withdraw its planes from the skies over Northern Iraq.

China is the other blip on the radar. It is a country undergoing fantastically rapid economic and social change, with an unsteady political apparatus that sometimes seems barely able to contain what is going on within its borders. China's growing nationalism may be contained, and its efforts to resolve its border problems with India and Russia are laudable. Nor is the drum-banging in the US over the "Chinese threat" particularly helpful. Nevertheless, as last year's confrontation with Taiwan showed, there is always the potential for China's many disputes with its neighbours to escalate.

What the peace reminds us of, however, is that war is not an organic necessity in any part of the world. The presence of rising and falling states, border disputes, economic and environmental tension and ethnic conflict, can be handled, or contained, with hard work and ingenuity. Goodwill cannot be engineered, but peace can be held even where fraternity runs thin.

That must not stop us seeking room for improvement. Conflict prevention through diplomacy and confidence-building measures can function if it is given time, and that means giving it greater priority. It is cheap and it can be effective, which should commend it to any state that has an interest in maintaining peace. Secondly, peacemaking (something which was relatively successful in Bosnia) can work if it has the backing of the UN and the main military powers. Thirdly, rapid and effective rebuilding of infrastructure and civil society after a conflict is vital. That task is proceeding too slowly in Bosnia, but it is happening. We are learning. The last seven years have taught us a lot about war and peace.

All of these lessons apply to the main Western powers, those with the military punch, diplomatic strength and economic clout to fight wars or to stop them if they want to. But they are also lessons for one man who is doubtless enjoying the festive season a little more than most after getting just what he wanted for Christmas. Kofi Annan, the new United Nations Secretary-General, has plenty of experience of keeping the peace from his years as an international civil servant. He is well-equipped to guide the organisation principally charged with maintaining the security of the whole world at such an important time. Let's hope that he can take us through another, still more peaceful year ahead.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Powers of DTI inspectors are an offence against natural justice

Sir: Your view (Business comment, 18 December) that DTI reports should continue to play an important role in "the apparatus for determining blame" in corporate malfeasance is at best controversial.

The massive expense of DTI reports, not to mention the bureaucratic inefficiency and inordinate delays, makes their public service highly questionable. But more importantly, the exceptional powers conferred upon DTI inspectors are contrary to natural justice.

If one speaks to those who have been subjected to the oppressive procedure of DTI inspectors, the themes are all too familiar. They consistently complain of prejudice on the part of inspectors; of disjointed and disorderly questions; of interviews conducted in windowless rooms; of being pressed to react instantly to questions relating back many years.

Inspectors are entitled to rely upon evidence that would be inadmissible in a court of law. They are not required to reveal the identities of witnesses and so those under investigation are denied the right to confront or cross-examine their accusers.

It is unacceptable that reports prepared in this manner are routinely published with massive publicity, even though the findings are likely to destroy the reputations of those under investigation.

GRANT MACKRILL
Bushey, Hertfordshire

Sir: The real iniquity of the Government's proposal to abolish the two-hour limit for children working on Sundays ("Unions move to sign up child workers", 21 December) is that it will result in more children working above the current permitted weekly total of 20 hours.

Although the Government claims there will be no significant change, as the overall limit on working hours will remain the same, in reality many children will be pressured by poverty and their employers to work above the permitted weekly maximum.

Unrepentant scrooges will be rubbing their hands in glee. In 1996 the chances of a firm being inspected by the authorities are in the order of once every six years, and those caught offending will suffer only a small financial penalty.

One factory inspector's report noted that:

"The profit to be gained by it [violation of a Factory Act] appears to be, to many, a greater temptation than they can resist; they calculate upon the chance of not being found out; and when they see the small amount of penalty and costs, which those who have been convicted have to pay, they find that if they should be detected there will still be a considerable balance of gain."

That report was published in 1856. Tragically, 140 years later, we have slipped back into the full viciousness of the 19th-century economy.

Dr GARY SLAPPER
Director, Institute of Industrial and Commercial Law
Staffordshire University

Fox-hunting long overdue for reform

Sir: Your leader column (24 December) cannot argue that fox-hunting is cruel but shouldn't be banned, on the basis there are many objectionable minority groups at large. Not much of an argument!

It's not about an urban-driven class war – a majority of rural residents oppose fox-hunting and many suffer from trespass, blocked roads, intimidation of dissenters, and offensive arrogance from people who think they have a right to impose their minority standards on a majority, including the use of public land. Hunting is not a harmless activity.

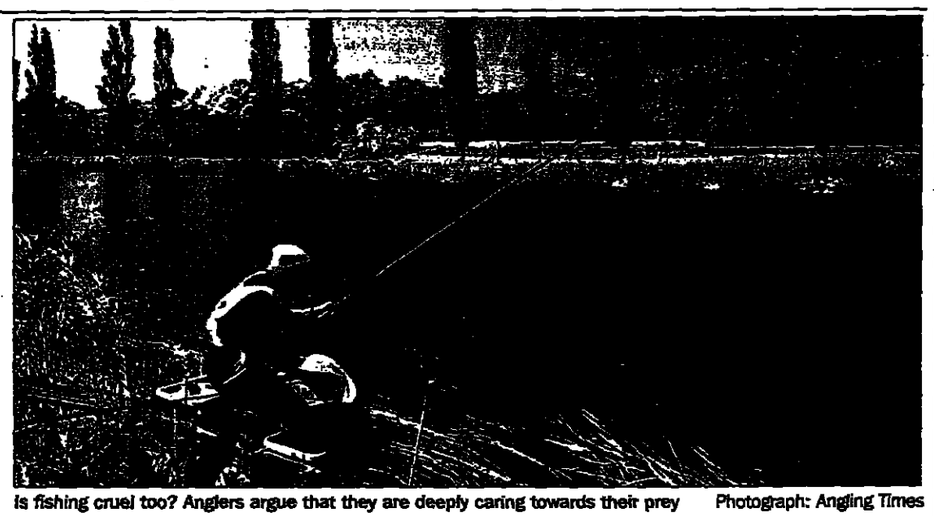
The impact of fox predation is much exaggerated, but if they have to be controlled, hunting with hounds is the least effective way of doing it. This has no other justification than entertainment. Good management of game and livestock is a priority, and effective and humane methods of control are available.

When Parliament receives more than 250,000 letters and a one-million-name petition called for the abolition of hunting, MPs take notice. A future Labour government will have many priorities to tackle, but a society that puts little value on the suffering of animals often puts little value on the suffering of people.

Labour is entirely right to tackle what is a moral issue long overdue for reform. Our commitment to a free vote on this is a manifesto one.

Only Labour has promised this, and for those people who think this issue is important they now have a clear choice at the next election.

ELLIOTT MORLEY MP
Labour Spokesperson for Animal Welfare
House of Commons
London SW1



Is fishing cruel too? Anglers argue that they are deeply caring towards their prey Photograph: Angling Times

Sir: Your leader quite correctly exposed the hypocrisy of the anti-hunt case, and outlined the contradictions and sound libertarian arguments which should encourage Labour politicians to treat the issue with caution.

Regrettably, it also gave substance to the erroneous view that hunting is the preserve of the wealthy "aristocracy", a view of hunting which is very far from the truth. The vast majority of people who follow hounds in this country do so on foot or in cars, and include those who are retired, unemployed or low-paid.

Not even a majority of the 45,000 regular mounted followers would consider themselves either aristocratic or wealthy. They work hard, and sacrifice little luxuries like holidays or nights out so they can afford to keep a horse and follow hounds.

Many would consider themselves "working-class" and many are traditional Labour voters; which is why many Labour candidates in "winnable" rural constituencies are becoming increasingly worried that hunting may be the issue which costs them a seat.

JANET GEORGE
London SE11

Sir: Whoever wrote your leading article appears to have absolutely no idea about anglers and fishing, as our purpose is not to "maim or kill" the fish we catch.

Yes, game anglers catch salmon and trout for the table, but the vast majority of anglers simply pit their wits and expertise against the species of fish they are endeavouring to catch, be it for financial reward in match fishing, or for personal satisfaction in specimen, specialist or pleasure fishing.

All the anglers I know go to great lengths to ensure the safety and welfare of fish they catch, with specially designed equipment and unhooking hats to ensure this end, prior to releasing them back into their watery domain. Anglers care about the environment and the fish and wildlife that are part of our rivers, lakes and canals. Yes we do get great pleasure from our sport, but we deeply care about the welfare of what we catch and safely return.

D A BEAUMONT
Knockholt, Kent

Sir: The line you take in your leader about fox-hunting seems a sensible one. There are, indeed, numerous activities which can be a nuisance to non-participants. However, my vote would at present still be for the abolition of fox-hunting because of the falsehood of it all.

I used to teach in a fox-hunting area, and amongst my pupils were the kennelman's sons. It was quite clear from their diary work that the hunt bred foxes.

At about the same time I saw demonstrated a fox trap. This large device, holding bait, shut when a fox entered. The animal was free to move about until shot the next morning. As a cheap and efficient device, it could not be bettered.

RICHARD WELCH
Denbigh, Clwyd

Virgin Mary tougher than you think

Sir: I would agree with Daphne Hampson that the Church has traditionally used the "Virgin Mother" as a stick to beat women (Faith and Reason, 21 December). However, the idea of Mary being passive is frankly ridiculous.

Not only is she approached directly by God as one free to make her own decision, but she insists that the Angel explains himself. Then she gives her consent, which is freely given and not mediated by any male relative.

It could have exposed her to death by stoning, as she could not know how Joseph would react.

There are in fact no passive women in the Gospels.

In their dealings with Jesus they argue, challenge, make demands, recognise him as Messiah and are treated with respect by him.

JOSÉ JOHNES
Crawle, Hereford & Worcester

Sir: Daphne Hampson repeats that the description of Mary in Matthew's Gospel as a "virgin" is based on a mistranslation of the Greek text of Isaiah 7 from the original Hebrew. It is a *non sequitur* because the Gospel of Luke also says that Mary was a virgin and does not refer to it as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. Further, scholars are satisfied that Luke's source was totally independent of Matthew.

ALAN PAVELIN
Chislehurst, Kent

Out of work, but 'jobless' no more

Sir: The "sharp fall in the jobless" (report, 19 December) need not "refuel rate fears" if my experience is anything to go by. I was registered as unemployed, and would have remained so if the rules had not been changed when the Job Seekers Allowance was introduced.

While the Job Centre did not pay me anything, my National Insurance contributions were kept up and I benefited from concessionary entrance prices to venues ranging from my local leisure centre to the Natural History Museum.

I was allowed to "sign on" fortnightly by post, as I live some seven miles from the Job Centre in Watford. This saved me time and money, and reduced road pollution. With the Job Seekers Allowance came a new rule that postal clients could only remain so if they could not reach the Job Centre by public transport in under one hour.

Not being prepared to go through the inconvenient and slightly tacky process of signing on in person, this, my first encounter with the benefits system, has ended as part of the alleged "reduction" in unemployment of 95,800 in November. Of course, the reality of my unemployed state has not changed.

DEREK S ALLEN
Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number.
Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

Fear prevents aid for rape victims

Sir: The "bystander apathy" reported by Ann Treneman ("Why Good Samaritans drove by", 23 December) is hardly a rarity – as a Community Police Officer on a council estate it is something I contend with every day.

However, further to Professor Latane's opinion, I would say that the resistance to actively help someone when others are around is because of a fear of how those others will react – in short, we don't feel we can rely on the goodwill of our fellow citizens to back us up. (If I had stopped to help, who would have stopped for me when the knife was turned in my direction?).

The sadness is that apathy is infectious. A decade of selfish economics, a criminal justice system that fails to protect victims and witnesses, and pressure groups that constantly harp on about individual rights have all contributed to the present mindset, which fails to recognise that as individuals we also have responsibilities.

JON FRANKLIN
Oxford

Sir: As a society we are no longer culturally, physically or judicially capable of coming to the defence of a rape victim.

Thirty years ago, the cries of a rape victim might have reached the ears of an ex-serviceman who, confident in his physical ability, training, and the backing of society and the law, would have been admirably equipped to see off any would-be rapist.

Today, a rapist will at least be armed with a knife, but if any would-be rescuer were to consider intervention equipped with a tyre iron or a crook-lock, to defend the life of both the victim and himself, he might end up in the dock rather than the villain.

Until good, moral sense – in the form of a logical interpretation of reasonable action in the face of violent crime – is restored, and the right-minded citizen is once again fully supported against the violent criminal, there will be many more Chislehursts.

D EADSFORTH
Winchester

Rally crowded

Sir: I was dismayed to read the caption accompanying the beautiful photograph of Jayne Blair taken at the Belfast Peace Rally (23 December). Far from being disappointed, Yorkshire Television, as one of the organisers, was delighted with the crowd.

To say there were only a few hundred at the event was totally misleading. The police estimate alone was a crowd of around two thousand.

PAULINE DUFFY
Executive Producer – Peace Rally
Yorkshire Television
Leeds

Clever Sir Tim

Sir: Sir Tim Rice is apparently upset that he has not been receiving sufficient accolades for his "Evita" lyrics ("'Evita' puts spotlight on creative feud", 18 December).

He is correct. In his 1976 album and 1978 stage scripts he described Eva Peron as "a new world Madonna with a golden touch".

This line has had to be changed in the recent film to avoid the confusion Sir Tim so mischievously anticipated.

Dr LAURENCE GERLIS
London W1

LETTER *from* THE EDITOR

Do you conclude, from reading your newspaper and listening to the radio over Christmas and New Year, that there is a particular propensity around this time for dumping babies out in the cold, getting lost on mountains, or vanishing tragically after going off in search of a bag of chips? Do people, overwhelmed by the stress and strain of enforced jollity (when in fact they feel desperate, or scared), prove more susceptible to personal disaster?

The answer is almost certainly no. The only difference about this time of year is that there is rarely anything else to report. The normal political and cultural mayhem is at an ebb; even politicians and celebrities need to spend at least a few hours with their families every year, as do their PR staff and spin doctors. For once, the happy(ish) and healthy(ish) segment of the population is hidden quietly away at home, doing the proper thing and minding its own business. In consequence, terrible individual events that, in fact, happen unreported every day and everywhere suddenly rise to the top of the news editors' lists, and you get to hear about them.

In a way, although sad, this seems rather a good thing. It reminds us that our sense of what is going on in the world is always slightly artificial. And there may even be a fortuitous seasonal value. We should, after all, perhaps recollect at Christmas that for many people the holiday serves only to emphasise their isolation or dismay.

Which leads neatly on to our Christmas appeal. In recent years one of my most gratifying tasks (first as managing editor, now as deputy) has been to organise appeals. First, the good news. Hundreds of you have responded to this year's appeal, which is on behalf of the NSPCC's work with abused children. By midday yesterday we had very nearly reached £20,000, every penny of which I have no doubt will be gratefully and well used by the charity. As ever, people's generosity has taken me aback.

So do you detect a note of disappointment? To be frank, yes: though grateful to those who have contributed (often very large sums) I had thought we would raise more. Three years ago we raised more than £300,000 for Bosnia charities; last year we raised well over £100,000, again for former Yugoslavia. This year we deliberately chose a charity close to home, and one that is working in a field where the paper has been busy uncovering scandal. Is it possible that *Independent* readers respond more positively to giving money to people suffering abroad, rather than round the next corner? That would be curious, if true. Either way, I would love to know whether you feel an annual Christmas appeal is a worthwhile exercise, and perhaps hear suggestions about what we might consider next time. And, of course, you can still catch up. Just send a cheque, made out to the Independent/NSPCC Victims of Abuse Appeal, to our usual address.

> Is it possible that readers respond more positively to giving money to people suffering abroad, rather than round the corner?

Like many other parents I spend a large part of Christmas playing children's games, talking children's talk, watching children's television. This occasionally leads to minor journalistic revelation, such as the acquisition of a whole new cultural vocabulary. My youngest daughter (aged two) has just discovered the Big Friendly Giant and his disgusterous muddled words. So, from the back seat of the car earlier this week, Daddy having cracked some feeble joke, she cackled flatteringly and shouted out: "Oh Daddy, you're just bonkerous!" This is a word I am willing to loan to headline writers everywhere. Indeed, I can think of several papers further down market who might have a regular use for it.

Have a bonkerous New Year.

Colin Hughes
Deputy Editor

QUOTE UNQUOTE

I predict a shower of meteorites in the autumn, but they will burn up entering the Earth's atmosphere. Otherwise, it doesn't look too bad. It will be a long time yet before the Earth is blown up – **Patrick Moore**, *astronomer*

A week of watching television has left me with the profoundest of respect for the TV critics, who endure conditions of work which make jobs in the sewers seem attractive by comparison – **Dr Anthony Daniels** *on returning to TV-viewing after 30 years*

Christmas brought so much excitement to Coronation Street that, by comparison, what happened in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago seemed like a non-event – **Roy Hattersley**, *Labour MP*

When I actually meet politicians, the Government, the Royal Family, members of the House of Lords and so on, they are remarkably ordinary people. When you get close to them, they are the same as my Aunt Ethel – **Dr George Carey**, *Archbishop of Canterbury*

Marilyn Monroe was the role model for my generation. She was a size 16 and she still is thought of as a goddess – **Alice Mahon**, *Labour MP, who is introducing a new Bill to clamp down on the slimming industry*

For all I knew, when a car had an L-plate on the back of it, it indicated that it was being driven by a leper – **Bill Bryson**, *the American author of a best-selling book about Britain*

Reduced-price insanity

The January sale is crunch-time for the serious shopaholic, writes Jane Furnival

Santa has brought us everything on our Christmas lists. So why did thousands of us feel the need to rush back to the shops on Boxing Day for such treasures as a swimsuit made out of garden string, a cherub with a rugby player's broken nose and a pair of thigh-high boots that fall down? (Those are just the failures I'll confess to.)

Going to the January sales is a primitive ritual. We gather to make a killing. Prices are "slashed" and "cut" and written in blood-red, the colour that makes our brains excited, sexually turned on and sometimes angry. It's a lottery. The promise is prizes for all, if only you rummage enough. Sales are also a great escape from post-Christmas family stress. Shops provide a safe, happy environment with everything neat, a smiley staff and a pampering atmosphere, not to mention the feeling that you, the customer, can do no wrong.

It's usually women who spend, spend, spend on sales but that doesn't mean they are somehow biologically the Shopping Sex. It is simply that they are conditioned to shop, thinks Dr Sheila Rossan, a sexual stereotype specialist at Brunel University.

"It has to do with the fact that traditionally men have been highly directed shoppers because until recently stores were closed after working hours," she says.

Women, on the other hand, have had more spare time and therefore been able to browse and pick and choose. The more ardent women shop in pairs. A recent fly-on-the-wall documentary at London's Harvey Nichols revealed only one woman by herself in the whole store. "Women like someone else's opinion. It's a social activity," Dr Rossan says.

Perhaps for dedicated shoppers, "saleing" is a continuation of the Christmas party feeling, when it is acceptable to be a little out of control. We rationalise our useless bargains by saying we're stocking up. I have seen "salers" copy the purchases of someone smarter next to them in the store. Perhaps Harvey Nicks and Co should try planting a few shoppers with model looks next to the atrocious stock. It would move faster.

"Sale-oholics feel exonerated by the cost reduction," explains Dr Ludwig Lowenstein, the shoppers' shrink, a psychologist who detoxes shopping addicts, or "onomaniacs" as they're known. He will only take a patient if they drop their weapons and go peacefully by giving up their credit cards.

Compulsive shoppers are at the extreme end of the spectrum of the browser-gatherer kind of shopper. Browsers seek a bit of a cheer-up. Compulsive shoppers really think they can fill their inner emptiness with material things. Shoes are at the top of their shopping list – 98.5 million pairs of women's shoes were sold this year – followed by perfume and clothes.

"I feel sorry for those born rich. Some feel they haven't got everything and are often depressed and anxious," says Dr Lowenstein. The less well-off end up committing fraud and going to prison to pay their bills.

Compulsive shoppers are like nymphomaniacs. Just as unsatisfied women rifle through every available man in search of the one who can give them the orgasm they have never had, these shoppers get their fix from the surge of adrenaline they get from spotting what might be ... The Solution, the Ultimate Thing that will really fulfil them. But then, like a drug, the feeling wears off and they have to shop to start the cycle again.

The Duchess of York is their patron saint and Awful Warning. Even when on her uppers, she would spend thousands to get herself out of a downer. She probably couldn't tell you what she bought.

The more controlled kind of shopper doesn't have this hunger. She is a hunter. The Opportunist.

Shawna Moss is a freelance shopping adviser based at London's Grosvenor House Hotel. "Evening dresses are brilliant buys in the sales," she advises. "So expensive otherwise." She takes her clients to dress hire shops which often sell lightly worn Cinderella ball gowns, like One Night Stand (44 Pimlico Road, London, SW1, 0171-730 8708).

Never be impressed by the name tag, she advises. "I see people get carried away by designer names in sales."

Her other tip is to negotiate the sale price down. "The richest women love a bargain. I have one client who can negotiate me under the table. I hide behind the coats."

The biggest sale shopper is a new type, the Sightseer. These use shopping as a form of entertainment, sport or therapy. Malls were built for Sightseers. They eat sandwiches around the fountains while their children play in the see-through lifts.

Primrose Wells, a 32-year-old wedding organiser, and her mother Maggie Evans, 53, are expert Sightseers. "I'm not an addict, but I enjoy it as therapy," says Maggie. The women see their shopping as female bonding, a celebration of the Christmas spirit, an escapade rather than an escape. "There's a lot of camaraderie between mothers and daughters in the changing rooms."

They plan their day carefully, getting up before six in the morning to find the parking space nearest the shop entrances. That leaves time for a civilised breakfast before the shops open. They wear comfortable flat shoes and take only one jumper, tied round their waists, because shops are so hot.

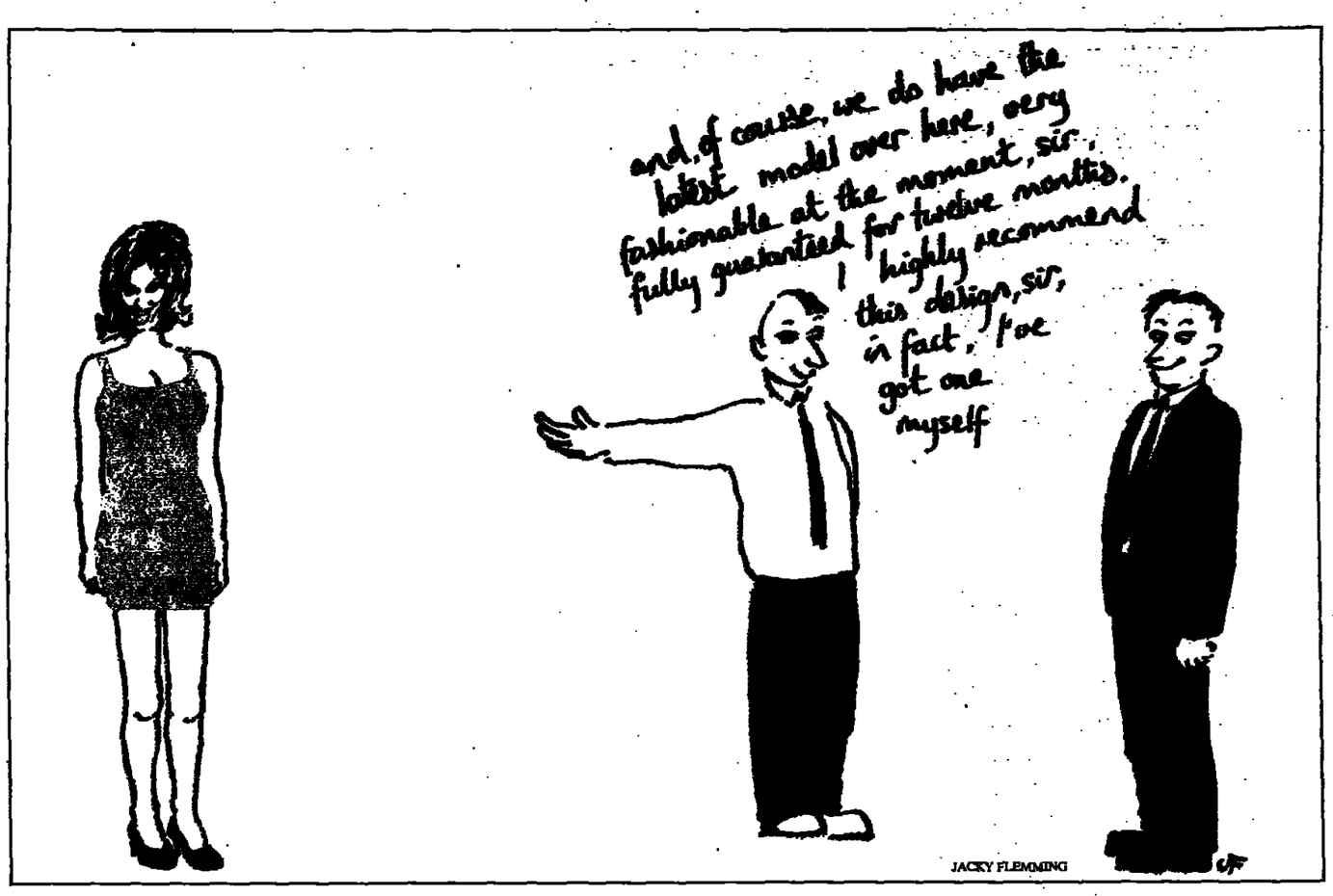
They won't buy special sale purchases, only proper stock. Primrose's big buy last year was nine pairs of roller blades for friends, reduced from £300 to £120 in Macro. "My husband Steve is terrified of going shopping, because I spend money. When you buy something, you rely on men being absent minded. When I hear women in the changing rooms saying, 'What shall I tell my husband?' I say, 'Tell him it's been in your wardrobe for years'."

Are there any men who enjoy sale shopping? Tim Guy, 28, is an HGV driver who counts shopping among his favourite sports. "I go to the sales at the end, when the crowds have died down. At the start of sales, you get 10 per cent off. At the end, you get 50."

While Maggie Evans is at the sales three times a week, her husband Ken, 56, has not been shopping for two years. Why doesn't he shop? "I'm happy with what I've got," he says, absentmindedly.

● Shawna Moss offers help with sale shopping. Tel 0973 638977

● Dr Ludwig Lowenstein offers advice to over-ardent shoppers in person or by letter. Allington Manor, Allington Lane, Fairoaks, Eastleigh, Hants, SO50 7DE. 01703 692261.



Good thing

Philippe Starck's 14" portable TV Tilts conveniently so that you can watch it in bed. If you lose the remote control, whistle and it will answer. A sure collector's piece, reduced to £199 from £230.

Selfridges, Oxford Street, London – sale starts 9am December 27.

Bad thing

Linen pillowcases for £58.65, reduced from £68.95 from The White Company (0171-385 7988). Save your money and marriage by going to bed rather than staying up late ironing them. Lunn Antiques offer similar new linen pillowcases at £34 a pair. Mail order possible. 86 New King's Road, London, SW6 (0171-736 4638).

Sure thing

Most shops give extra discounts, sale previews and reduced price parking to storecard holders. Don't wait to apply on the first sale day or you'll miss the bargains. Apply in advance – and remember to ask for a temporary card in time for the sale.
Harvey Nichols – 0171-235 5000
Harrods – 0171-730 1234
House of Fraser – 0171-834 1515

Starts and stops

six of the best 1997 resolutions

1 Huge spiral-bound diary, £11.99 This diary has a good year planner, important dates, international dialling codes, address pages and a huge notes section at the back – ideal for any international jet setter. From Paperchase (0171-580 8496) branches nationwide.

2 Seven days' large Nicotinell patches, £15.99 The patches have been successful on some people, but different methods of stopping smoking suit different people – including hypnosis, tapes, books and videos. If you do choose to try patches ask the pharmacist first if they're suitable for you, especially when taking other medication. From Boots, branches nationwide.

3 Trainers, from a selection by Nike Make sure that you choose the right trainers for the activity: if you do a lot of different sport go for a cross trainer, for aerobics choose one with extra support around the ankles. But generally make sure you buy the right size as feet tend to swell when doing any sport. From J D Sports (01706 628 012) branches nationwide.

4 'Raw Energy Food Combining Diet', by Leslie Kenton, £6.99 Food combining diets mix carbohydrates with protein allegedly increasing your energetic state and improving your digestive system. From Books Etc stores (0171-379 6838) throughout London.

5 One driving lesson from BSM will cost £16.50 – after which you can book up a course if you're happy with the instructor and the company (which means a good discount) or carry on with single lessons. Look in your local yellow pages or phone 0800 700800 for your nearest branch.

6 Linguaphone Italian travel pack, £9.99 This pack includes a travel cassette, a language cassette, a phrase book and panic cards. Learning a new language is a challenge, but think how impressed your lady friend will be when you go to Florence or Venice and you can talk the lingo. From Books Etc (0171-379 6838) branches throughout London.

PHOTOGRAPHER: TONY BUCKINGHAM
STYLIST: HOLLY DAVIES

Best for the road ahead

Gavin Green nominates his top twelve motors for '97

After spoiling the kids for Christmas, it's now time to treat yourself. January is the second most popular time to buy a new car after August, thanks to the kudos of setting a New Year date on the logbook. It's also a much more sensible time to buy than August, not least because all the new models are now safely in place at your local dealer.

This year's top 12 feature six newcomers, proof that it's been a good year for new cars. Major new models of 1997 – which may be worth waiting for – include a new small Land Rover (on sale next December), the Renault Scenic (out in June), a new Toyota Corolla (summer) and the Ford Puma (a small coupé due to hit the road in June). In the meantime, here are the best value new cars to go for this January:

Baby cars: Ford Ka. Not so much a baby as a stylish babe, the Ka stands out for its wacky lines, directness and eagerness. The back seat is almost useless and the boot's hopeless, but who cares? Also recommended: Fiat Cinquecento Sporting. Tiny in size and big in performance, the sporty Cinquecento is a hoot to drive and cheap to run.

Small cars: Volkswagen Polo. The best built car in the class, and one of the roomiest. The only downside is that its tremendous popularity means you're unlikely to be able to negotiate much of a discount. Don't buy the 1.0-litre model, though – it's too slow. Also recommended: new Ford Fiesta, which is better to drive than the Polo if not as roomy.

Medium cars: Fiat Brava. The step-ahead family favourite has the boldest design in the Escort class and drives like a sports car. It's also terrifically roomy. The only downside is a slightly jittery ride, which should be fixed next year. Also recommended: Peugeot 306.

Big cars: Ford Mondeo. This year's mid-life facelift has transformed the one-time class journeyman into a class act. More distinctive looks combine with improvements to the engine, ride and steering, to produce a well-rounded and comfortable family car. Also recommended: Peugeot 406, for its sublime ride and its great looks.

Small executive cars: Audi A4, which sets new standards for style, quality and driver appeal in the class – and easily trumps the old small executive car star, the BMW 3-series. Mind you, the 3-series, despite its age, is still the second best car in the class.

Big executive cars: BMW 5-series. One of the best new cars of 1996 and a machine almost eerily free from fault. It rides, handles and drives brilliantly, and looks bold, if still like a BMW. Go for the 2.3-litre six-cylinder engine unless you really need big muscle – in which case specify the 2.8. Also recommended: Mercedes E-class, which isn't quite as good to drive as the 5-series, but is even better made.

Luxury cars: Jaguar XJ6. Now two years old, the latest saloon is the first Jag with German build quality and reliability. Just as important, it mixes these with all those marvellous, long-standing Jaguar niceties such as wafting ride, Edwardian-sitting-room cabin and great style. Late next year, it will get the new V8 engine, as fitted to the XK8 sports car, which will make it even better. Also recommended: Lexus LS400. Understated to the point of being too plain, the Lexus is still the luxury car benchmark for engine refinement and quietness.

4x4s: Jeep Cherokee. Long in the tooth the Cherokee may be, but it's still the best value off-roader on the market and one of the best to drive, easily preferable to a Land Rover Discovery. Its fake wood and leather trim is kitsch to some, but authentically American to others. A facelift and a few mechanical improvements are planned for the coming year. Also recommended: Toyota RAV-4. Easily the best small 4x4, miles ahead of the Suzukis and Daihatsus.

Estates: Mercedes E-class. An expensive way to cart home the goods from the local DIY store, and a pricy way to carry a big family, but it's still the best estate car in the world. Built like a tank and full of brilliant details. Also recommended: Renault Laguna estate; Mondeo estate. Both are roomy, well-made, good value and comfortable.

MPVs: Seat Alhambra. Identical to the Ford Galaxy or Volkswagen Sharan but, owing to its inferior badge, cheaper. Also recommended: the Galaxy or the Sharan – if you don't want to drive a car named after a chair.

Sports cars: Mercedes SLK. Just on sale, but already with a two-year waiting list, the SLK has all the style of the old ex-Princess Diana SL but only half the price tag. Hugely desirable, and fabulous to drive. Also recommended: Jaguar XK8 and MGF. Both prove that while Britain may have lost its indigenous car industry, it hasn't lost the knack of making great sports cars. The MGF shows that Rover can still make imaginative cars, while the XK8 is the best engineered Jaguar ever.

Supercars: Bentley Continental T. Stupidly expensive (£220,000), stupendously fast and stupefyingly imposing, the Continental T is the best Bentley since they won Le Mans more than 60 years ago. Despite the small size of its maker (Rolls-Royce), the Conti proves that when it comes to making outrageous, hand-built luxury cars, nobody does it better. Also recommended: any Ferrari.

Two to watch for: the Grand Cherokee (above) and the Alhambra (left)

Going up ...but slowly

Penny Jackson gathers predictions for the new market

This year the forecasters got it wrong. Their predictions of 3 per cent now look very modest when set against an annual increase of at least 7 per cent on the latest calculations of the Halifax. Some hot spots have seen rises up to 20 per cent and more. This year few are showing such caution. The investment bank, UBS, is not alone in predicting an average rise of 10 per cent. For London and the south east UBS expects increases of 15 per cent, while in Scotland, Wales and the North, between 6 and 8 per cent.

What few seemed to have anticipated was the shortage of good property that fuelled prices. Savills, who had predicted an average price increase of 5.2 per cent for this year, sees this situation continuing as long as people's housing aspirations are not matched by the stock available. This year, their national forecast, which includes a Labour victory, is an 8.7 per cent rise, with prime country houses leading the field at 14.3 per cent. Here, specialists in their field give their predictions.

General

David Wood, Black Horse Agencies: "Last month saw our highest number of applicants but they are not putting their own houses on the market. However, early in 1997, when they become aware of the shortage of property, I expect to see new instructions coming in. They will certainly get from between 1 and 3 per cent more than in the last quarter of 1996. I do not think the election will have much effect on the market, nor a steady increase in interest rates. There will still be good mortgage deals around next year."

Ian Darby, John Charcol, mortgage adviser: "If interest rates do not rise and prices continue to increase, the market will become overheated. For that reason we expect interest rates to rise after the election and that by the end of the year they will be 8.99 per cent. That means about a 30 per cent increase in the cost of money which will slow the market down. As a result we see house prices rising nationally by 6 per cent and a bit more in the south east. We expect the General Election to have a dampening effect on the market immediately before and after."

London

Yolande Barnes, Savills: "We see prices in prime central London increasing by 7.4 per cent, but higher increases in the second division of established locations. These include Wandsworth, Chiswick, Clapham Common, Battersea, Brook Green, West Hampstead, Fulham, Hammersmith and Highbury."

Rebecca Read, Cluttons: "Prices in central London will continue to rise at about 10 per cent. I wouldn't be surprised to see 15 to 20 per cent for the best examples of their kind, although I do not see a return to the boom of the late Eighties."

The North-east

Bryan Jaram, Jackson-Stops & Staff: "We have seen an average increase of 5 per cent over the year. We will see an uplift next year because we always lag behind the south by six to nine months. I expect to see a lot more activity early in the year as there is a great deal of pent-up demand."

The North-west

Graham Adnitt, Jackson-Stops & Staff: "We are not getting a movement of people into the North-west so I cannot see anything forcing prices up. I see the market moving ahead slowly and steadily."

Country houses

Ian Homersham, John D Wood, which largely covers the south: "More properties should start coming on to the market next year but unless it is swamped, which is unlikely, it will not be possible to keep up with demand. The scarcity of good houses and the increase in earnings generally in London will push prices up by about 12 per cent. There will be increasing pressure on homes in popular locations for which some people will be prepared to pay that bit extra. There is a strong market at the moment and those considering selling would be advised to take advantage of it."

New homes

David Mote, The House Builders' Federation: "The increase in starts has been lowest in London and the South-east where the demand for good quality homes is highest. It is critical for more planning permission to be given. We expect to see a decline in the use of 'brown land' as it becomes more expensive to develop there. We see house prices rising on average by 7 per cent."

Everything that you need to know about 1997

JEREMY WARNER

'The utilities are going to have a really bad time of it. The windfall profits tax will be designed in a way that chiefly hits the water and electricity companies'

I am getting in early with my New Year forecasts, so let's start with the easiest prediction of all. Tony Blair's New Labour will win the general election with a sizeable though not overwhelming majority while the Conservative Party will degenerate into a state of outright civil war; it is by no means clear that the Euro-sceptics will end up on top.

What this means for financial markets is a more difficult question to answer. Certainly Mr Blair as prime minister will mark a quite decisive break with Britain's imperial past and the government can as a consequence be expected to become more positive about Europe.

That doesn't mean we'll be in the first wave of those joining the single European currency, which will be confined to Germany, its satellite states, and France. Sorry, Italy, not yet. Sterling will retain some of its recent strength, if only because interest rates will be rising strongly to choke off runaway demand and to counter-balance Labour's spending plans. Don't expect markets to be quite as sanguine about a change of government as Gordon Brown would like to think. To establish its credibility with markets, New Labour is going to have to prove itself and that's going to mean tough choices on spending and taxation.

The stock market will go nowhere; Wall Street comes seriously off the boil; and, yes, Tokyo remains in the doldrums – again. This is not going to be the year of the great Japanese revival. Why should it be? Japan is now a mature economy. Even at this depressed level, shares remain extremely overvalued against other stock markets. Serious difficulties will arise during the handover in Hong Kong. There will be bloodshed and an international crisis, further undermining confidence in international markets. No more exuberance in stock prices.

What happens on the domestic front depends on the extent to which Labour follows stated policy, such as it is. One thing is not in doubt, however; the utilities are going to have a really bad time of it. The windfall profits tax will be designed in a way that chiefly hits the water and electricity companies. On top of that, they can expect much tougher regulation including the introduction of a formalised system for sharing profits between customers and shareholders. Shares in companies that remain independent can be expected to be reduced to the status of bonds.

There will be a revival of the corporate state under Mr Blair. Particularly favoured status is given to British Telecom, BSkyB, the BBC, and BP. BT's deal with Labour – to wire up all public institutions to the superhighway free of charge in return for being released early from the ban on broadcast entertainment – is enacted, causing a flood of litigation from cable operators, which claim they would never have set up their rival networks had they known this was going to happen. The relationship between BT, Rupert Murdoch and Mr Blair becomes progressively stronger causing growing unease in media and political circles.

Competition policy will be operated with a light touch, despite stated intentions on this front; those that believe Labour will kill off the deal-making industry will be proved wrong. Corporate finance departments continue to thrive, finding ever more ingenious ways of doing things.

Pearson and EMI will flirt with, and possibly consummate, a merger. EMI's chairman, Sir Colin Southgate is a friend of Pearson's chairman in waiting, Dennis Stevenson. Sir Colin is known to want to take EMI into other forms of intellectual property – publishing in particular – and both companies are under threat of hostile takeover. What could be a more natural fit?

There will be at least another two insurance mergers. Scottish Widows is demutualised via a takeover from a leading English clearing bank.

And now for the silly but plausible predictions. Sir Leon Brittan will retire from the European Commission to become a highly paid international gopher for Goldman Sachs. That creates a British vacancy at the Commission and who better to fill it than Kenneth Clarke? He'll need a job shortly. Eddie George will be persuaded to take early retirement and Gavyn Davis, senior economist at Goldman Sachs, is appointed Governor. Don Cruickshank will survive as director-general of Oftel, as will his opposite number at Ofgas, Clare Spottiswoode, but the other regulators, Ian Byatt (Ofwat), Stephen Littlechild (Offer), John Bridgeman (Office of Fair Trading) and John Swift (the rail regulator), will go – all to be replaced by high-profile political animals.

I make no apologies for returning to the high drama surrounding the closing stages of CE Electric's bid for Northern Electric. Nobody emerges well from the episode, least of all the Takeover Panel, which once again comes out of the mire looking as awkward and out of place as a country squire at a Spice Girls party. I've yet to get to the bottom of why the Panel decided to extend the bid, thus allowing the Americans to gain control, but it would appear to be as a kind of punishment to the defending team.

Not that this is at all apparent from the Panel's statement in which BZW is exonerated over the little matter of the undisclosed £250,000 fee. Even if we had known about this fee, the Panel says, we still would have allowed BZW to make all those defensive share purchases in the market. "It wasn't a bung to BZW for the purchase of the shares, honest," the Panel protests. So why extend the bid, allowing the Americans to gain control? "Oh, that's because they didn't tell us about it." Yes, well.

The lawyers were just dying to crawl all over this one. The Americans were in no mood to abide by the Panel's decision, should it have gone against them, and the writ was already under preparation. By doing what it did, the Panel avoids an embarrassing court challenge to its authority and BZW escapes without even the slightest reprimand. And don't you dare suggest we are open to criticism, warns Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, BZW's parent company. For how much longer can the City get away with messy compromises of this sort? By any stretch of the imagination, this one's a classic. Northern's been punished but its advisers have not been reprimanded.

The truth of the matter is that self-regulation is as unsatisfactory in takeovers as it is in any other walk of life. Inevitably, the self-regulating organisation operates for the benefit of the members it regulates, rather than the wider public interest. However fierce the battle of the moment, the interests of the whole are generally best served by sweeping these questionable episodes under the carpet. Overt criticism is rarely made and even more rarely acted upon. That's one thing that won't change much next year. Of that we can be certain.

Business review of the year

January

The new year starts as the old one ended with one of the most bitterly contested takeover battles of recent times – Granada's hostile tilt at the Forte hotels and restaurant group. But 1996 is barely a week old when a new storm hits the City. The Stock Exchange sacks its chief executive, Michael Lawrence, saying he had lost the confidence of its member firms and the board. A City outsider, Mr Lawrence had tried to push through unpopular reforms at the Exchange and trod on too many toes.

Woolwich Building Society follows the Halifax with plans to become a bank and seek a stock market listing. More than 3.5 million members look forward to their share in a £3bn windfall. Interest rates are cut by 0.25 per cent to 6.25 per cent.

UniChem makes an "agreed" £548m offer for the Lloyds Chemists chain. But a year later the deal will not have reached a conclusion.

Forte concedes defeat in its £3.8bn battle against Granada in spite of a "scorched earth" defence. Sir Rocco Forte bows out with the pledge: "I'll be back."

Hanson, the archetypal conglomerate, announces plans to break itself up into four companies. It is a trend others will follow.

February

The end of a "fat cat". British Gas says its unpopular chief executive, Cedric Brown, will retire in May – a year early. The blow is softened by an annual pension of £247,000 and a one-year £120,000 consultancy deal. Mr Brown, who was lambasted as the ultimate "fat cat" after a 75 per cent pay rise in 1994, denies he was pushed out by the British Gas chairman, Richard Giordano.

Mr Giordano, an American, angers "Sid", the group's army of small investors, saying the utility has too many shareholders. British Gas also reveals plans to split into two. British Gas Energy and TransCo International, the pipeline business, are the new entities.

Gehe of Germany tops UniChem's offer for Lloyds Chemists with a £584m cash bid.

MAI merges with the Express newspapers group United News & Media in a £3bn deal.

Ratcatcher Rentokil launches a £1.8bn bid for the business services group BET.

Thorn-EMI announces plans to separate its Thorn rentals business from the EMI music label.

March

The prospect of economic recovery gathers pace with sharp increases in house prices, followed by the third cut in interest rates in four months. Base rates are cut by another 0.25 per cent to 6 per cent. But shoppers and estate agents stay cautious as the feel-good factor remains elusive. Later, a resurgence of the BSE scare on beef flares up, hitting shares in meat groups. Supermarkets are affected too as the public spurns beef.

BP and Mobil merge their European downstream businesses in a $5bn deal that means 3,000 job losses.

Former Stock Exchange chief executive Michael Lawrence agrees a £500,000 compensation package.

Kvaerner, the Norwegian engineering group, pays £904m for Trafalgar House.

Two Swiss drugs companies, Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz, announce a £40bn merger to create a new behemoth, Novartis.

The SFA clears Peter Baring and Andrew Tuckey of responsibility for the collapse of Barings Bank. But it seeks assurances from them regarding their intentions to re-enter the investment industry.

Bass is said to be in talks to buy Allied Domecq's share in Carlsberg-Tetley and Lord Sterling shakes up P&O, including plans to float Bovis Homes.

Chelsea becomes the sixth football club to gain a stock market listing when Chelsea Village goes public.

April

The biggest merger deal in UK corporate history is in prospect with news that BT and Cable & Wireless are in discussions about combining their operations. However, neither side can apparently agree on anything, including price.

The housing market gets a much-needed boost when Nationwide, Britain's second-biggest building society, cuts its main mortgage rate by 0.25 percentage points to 6.74 per cent, the lowest since January 1965. It sets off a wave of cuts by other societies and banks.

Some 1.4 million members of National & Provincial vote on its £1.35bn takeover by Abbey National. The deal is approved.

The Woolwich drops a bombshell with the sacking of Peter Robinson, its £300,000-a-year chief executive, amid allegations that he had misused society resources. Mr Robinson accuses Woolwich directors of plotting against him.

Electricity takeover activity continues unabated with the shock news that the Southern Company of the US is seeking to buy National Power. At the same time National Power eyes up Southern Electric of the UK and PowerGen approaches Midlands Electricity.

Rover faces a shock of a different kind when its owner, BMW, transforms a £91m profit reported for 1995 into a £148m loss. The company blames the Germans' "conservative" accounting policies.

May

The gas industry regulator, Clare Spottiswoode, sparks outrage with her package of price controls for British Gas's pipeline business. They will cut domestic bills by an average of £30, but threaten £650m of British Gas's revenues.

Hundreds of famous-name high street shops and thousands of jobs are at risk as the Facia empire built up by entrepreneur Stephen Hinchcliffe crumbles. Mr Hinchcliffe faces legal action by the DTI and possible disqualification as a company director.

Peter Baring appears before MPs to deny charges of incompetence over the £900m lost in the Nick Leeson affair. He tells them: "I do not think we were greedy, stupid or idle."

The flotation of Railtrack chugs out of the sidings, despite Labour attempts at a derailment.

Ian Lang, president of the Board of Trade, blocks the bid for National Power by the US Southern Company and any bid for PowerGen by pledging to retain his "golden share" in the companies.

Midlands Electricity goes under the hammer to an agreed joint bid by another two US utility groups, Cinergy and GPU.

The insurance industry is rocked by the £6bn merger of Royal and Sun Alliance.

BT pulls the plug on merger talks with Cable & Wireless.

June

Just as the economy shows signs of stronger growth, the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, unexpectedly decides to cut interest rates. It emerges that the cut, of 0.25 per cent to 5.75 per cent, was against the advice of the Bank of England. The markets take the news badly. Mortgage lenders take no action.

Another trading scandal hits the City as the Japanese Sumitomo Corporation reveals $1.8bn losses run up by its top copper dealer, Yasuo Hamanaka, who is known as "Mr Five Per Cent." The reputation of the London Metal Exchange is hit.

The nuclear industry is prepared for sale as the Government puts a preliminary price of £2bn on British Energy. It proves much too optimistic.

Oftel, the telephones watchdog, plans tough new powers to curb anti-competitive behaviour by BT.

W H Smith pulls out of its disastrous Do It All DIY joint venture with Boots. Selling its 50 per cent stake to its partner costs Smith's £64m. The following day the new chief executive, Bill Cockburn, announces a restructuring costing £285m.

Shares in Wickes, the third-biggest DIY chain, are suspended as details emerge of accounting irregularities. Henry Sweetbaum, the £1.2m-a-year boss, resigns, along with the finance director.

July

There are further signs that the economy is starting to simmer. A report forecasts a 10 per cent rise in house prices. Recovery on the high street starts to trickle down to industry and Mr Clarke and Mr George continue to disagree about the right direction for interest rates.

All this gives the stock market the jitters and when a surge in payroll figures in the US confirms their nascent boom, Wall Street suffers the first of a series of violent gyrations. Back home, the new issues market catches a cold, with British Energy falling 10 per cent in first dealings.

Takeover activity remains buoyant, with Whitbread snapping up Café Rouge chain Pelican for £133m and Hays making a tilt at Salvesen. The bids that never were include Guinness running its slide rule over GrandMet and the aborted merger of Psion and Amstrad.

Despite the strength of the economy, many people feel no safer in their jobs, and for good reason. ICI says it is laying off 2,700; Rolls-Royce puts the famous old engineering name of Parsons on the block, threatening more than 2,000 jobs; C&J Clark, the shoe maker, makes 1,400 redundant; and the Stock Exchange lets 400 go.

August

The silly season becomes the month of the row. Stagecoach causes a rumpus by paying £825m for the rolling stock company Porterbrook, £300m more than management had shelled out when they bought the business from the taxpayer in January. George Simpson has a disagreement over his £10m pay package as successor to Lord Weinstock at GEC.

Tiny Rowland chips in with a tirade against the new regime at Lonrho after the conglomerate announces plans to float its hotels arm. In the end, the plan is dropped after the company fails to drum up enough institutional support for the sale and a trade buyer, Stakis, is found instead for the Metropole hotels. Thistle Hotels manages to come to the market, although at a rather lower price than had been hoped.

One row is cleared up – the spat between Eurotherm and its chief executive, Claes Hultman, who was shown the door only to be welcomed back again after institutions demanded the return of a man they credited with turning the business round. Colin "Ned" Kelly, a trader at Liffe, has a row with a female colleague and is fined £500 for abusive language.

High street spending booms, there is a sharp fall in the jobless rate, house prices push up inflation and credit card sales go through the roof.

Ups and downs: 1996 was the year of the consumer spending boom, financial scandals which rocked the City and one of the most boring Budgets on record

September

As the business world returns relaxed and tanned from its summer holidays, September brings more than its fair share of shocks. The biggest comes in the form of a nerdy-looking fund manager from Deutsche Morgan Grenfell called Peter Young, with a penchant for designing rockets and, allegedly, a girl called Sandra. As details emerge of irregularities in his handling of ordinary savers' money, it becomes clear that he has perpetrated one of the biggest financial scandals since Maxwell. Deutsche bails out its troublesome British money manager, freezes Mr Young's assets and finally sacks him. The Serious Fraud Office launches an inquiry.

British fund managers are left seething by a plunge in the share price of Matthew Clark, the cider maker that had set out on a spending spree to buy Taunton and Gaymer's and then taken the eccentric marketing route of cutting its advertising budget. The future of Peter Aikens, the company's chief executive who was paid more than £400,000 to move house, is thrown into doubt.

Thomas the Tank Engine, steams to the market, making a small fortune for Britt Allcroft.

October

October is another month of Lottery-style windfalls for a lucky few as the FTSE 100 breaks through the 4,000 barrier. About 100 instant millionaires are created when NatWest buys investment banking boutique Hambro Magan. The three founders of pet retailer Pet City make millions in paper profits in a £150m merger with PetsMart of the US, while the creators of Prism Rail are £27m better off thanks to a innovative rights issue.

Elsewhere, carpetbaggers are out in force to try and cash in on Norwich Union's planned £4.5bn flotation. Even late sunseekers gain an unexpected bonus as the pound reaches its highest level for two years.

But the Chancellor, rather against the spirit of the time, moves to close a tax loophole on special dividends and share buybacks.

Takeover activity continues apace. CE Electric of the US launches a hostile £651m offer for Northern Electric, sneaking home amid much acrimony this week, while United News & Media finally lands exhibitions group Blenheim for £529m. The long-awaited consolidation of the cable industry sees Mercury, Nynex CableComms, Videotron and Cell Cablemedia join forces in a £5bn merger.

November

The last Budget before the election proves to be a sensation, but not because of its contents. Details of the famous red box's contents are leaked to the *Daily Mirror*, which declines to publish them. After the Chancellor sits down it becomes clear why. One of the most boring Budgets on record sees the basic rate of income tax reduced by 1p to 23p, petrol raised by 3p a litre, a packet of cigarettes go up by 15p and the cost of a bottle of spirits cut by 26p a bottle.

The hoped-for blockbuster deal finally arrives in the shape of a £35bn merger between BT and MCI of the US.

In Germany, the £8bn Deutsche Telekom flotation is five times oversubscribed.

Volkswagen sacrifices its production chief, Jose Ignacio Lopez, as the long-running industrial espionage row with General Motors rumbles on.

Shares in Eurotunnel fall after a fire in the Channel Tunnel halts rail services between Britain and France.

December

Football comes home to the City in December as barely a day goes by without a club announcing plans to seek a stock market flotation. The starting gun for the stampede is fired after it emerges that the satellite broadcaster BSkyB has started informal talks with leading clubs about the early introduction of pay-per-view television.

The prospect of substantially enhanced television income also sends the value of football clubs such as Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur, which are already quoted on the Stock Exchange, to new heights.

Also reaching for the skies are Boeing and McDonnell as the two US aircraft makers announce a $45bn merger that puts the skids under their European rival, Airbus Industrie.

There is drama right up until Christmas Eve in the takeover of Northern Electric by CE Electric, with the US suitor snatching victory by the narrowest of margins after the bid deadline is unexpectedly extended. Elsewhere, three contested bids remain outstanding in the engineering sector alone as the future of Newman Tonks, William Cook and Burnfield hang in the balance.

Compiled by The Independent's *City staff*

Men making news (from left): Sir Rocco Forte; Peter Young; and Michael Lawrence

market report / shares

Data Bank

FTSE 100
4091.0 -1.5

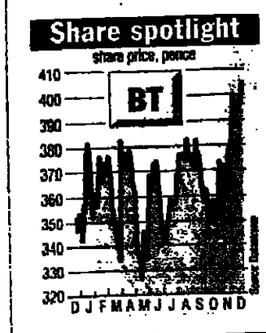
FTSE 250
4470.5 +10.0

FTSE 350
2031.1 +0.4

SEAQ VOLUME
176.2m shares,
10,892 bargains

Gilts Index
94.76 unch

Share spotlight



Thin turnover as skeleton staff rattle around the City

Shares flirted with a new closing high but lost their festive blush in the bizarre trading conditions which are bound to prevail on a day sandwiched between the Christmas holiday and the weekend.

Not many City men trundled into their offices. Most firms were content to operate with skeleton staffs and the lack of interest of the securities industry and the investing public in the half-day session was demonstrated by the exceedingly thin turnover.

Footsie ended 1.5 points lower at 4,091 after touching a trading high of 4,102.9. The early flourish was little more than a knee-jerk reaction to a sound overnight display by the Dow Jones Average.

Interest rate worries were cited as the prime influence behind the stock market's hesitancy. Many observers expect increases on both sides of the Atlantic in the new year.

BT had the distinction of leading the blue chips with a 6p gain to 405p. The high volume of festive calls seemed to be the immediate reason. However BT has been dialling some interesting gains as the market, after early hesitancy, has become increasing receptive to the proposed takeover of MCI, the US giant.

The new charges for mobile telephones and BT's involvement in digital broadcasting have also helped offset the unrelentingly tough stance of the industry regulator. The shares are riding at their highest point for nearly 18 months, having fallen to 326.5p.

Among other blue chips **BTR** continued its revival, up 3.5p to 273.5p, and **Allied Domecq**, on the rumoured Lehman Brothers buy advice, put on another 2.5p to 452.5p.

The debate about Christmas trading moved in favour of the more optimistic souls as the

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

John Lewis Partnership offered support to the view that retailers have enjoyed a bumper time.

JLP said sales in the week ending 14 December were up 5.1 per cent on last year and weekly department store sales a record 5.9 per cent higher.

The company expects to beat such a performance by a "substantial margin" in the last full pre-Christmas week.

The JLP evidence helped to ease concerns which have arisen over festive trading. There has been evidence from some quarters that the sales volume has faltered in the last stage of the run in. But with JLP so positive **Dixons** gained 5.5p to 529.5p and **Next** 4.5p to 554p.

Blacks Leisure, the leisure wear retailer, consolidated its position as the year's top performing share. The price improved 6p to 350.5p, lifting the percentage gain to around 600 per cent. **JJB Sports** jumped 26p to 290p.

The threat of increased mail order competition took the shine from **Great Universal Stores**. It gave up 8.5p to 606.5p. **Sears**, which is near to unloading its Freemans mail order side, possibly to Littlewoods, rose 1p to 91p.

Oils produced a smattering of modest gains, largely on hopes of further takeover excitement. The end of the **Northern Electric** takeover battle left the distributors shares up 9p at 646p. Northern is replaced in the FTSE 250 index by **Mayflower Corporation**, a car bodies maker and vehicle conversions group. The two remaining electrical distributors moved ahead as they awaited what is seen as the inevitable takeover strike. **Southern** put on 5.5p to 784p and **Yorkshire** 6p to 808.5p.

Burnfield, expected to surrender to the improved **Fairey** bid, rose 11.5p to 153.5p. Fairey, riding at 697p in the summer, fell a further 18.5p to 582.5p.

Scottish Pride, a dairy group, jumped 15p to 57.5p as the Department of Trade and Industry gave qualified clearance to a bid from their bigger rivals Robert Wiseman. The merger creates a business with around 80 per cent of the Scottish milk market.

Two computer groups seen as beneficiaries of the millennium computer changeover made headway. **DCS** improved 22p to 262.5p and **Delphi** 12.5p to 712.5p. **Micro Focus** rose 55p to 955p.

Bodycote International, once big in textiles and now a safety products and packaging group, added 25p to 820p, a peak. The strength stemmed from the success of a £115.5m rights issue. The company, which became disillusioned with the textile industry in 1989, is taking over Brukens of Sweden, one of the largest heat treatment groups on the Continent with 27 plants.

Premier Farnell, the electronic components group, continued to benefit from a planned US sale which should raise $300m. The shares improved 10p to 749.5p. They have risen 37p since the disposal was announced last week and are now at their peak.

Taking Stock

❑ The behaviour of **Lehman Brothers**, the US securities house, over **Acorn Computer** is intriguing. In its capacity as a market-maker it has declared a 12.98 per cent share holding, down from 13.5 per cent on Monday.

Olivetti, the struggling Italian group, has 31.2 per cent and there is speculation it wants to get out.

It is unusual for a market-maker to take such a large stake on its books and Lehman's action could herald corporate developments with possibly a US strike. Acorn held at 195.5p.

❑ Shares of **Taylor Nelson**, the research group, rose 7.25p to 54.5p, back to their level before a surprise profit warning.

The price fell to around 40p after the warning but has since reclaimed the lost ground on steady buying.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.
Other details: r Ex rights x Ex-dividend a Ex all u Unlisted Securities Market s Suspended pp Partly Paid pm Nil Paid Shares. ‡ AIM Stock
Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

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FTSE 100 – Real-time	00	Sterling Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	38
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	39
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	20	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	21	High Street Banks	41

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Market Leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000
BT	170000	Ladbroke	20000	Sears	150000	B/E Inds.	120000
Hanson	270000	Lloyds TSB	20000	Tomkins	150000	Bank of Scotland	120000
British Energy	260000	BP	170000	RTZ	140000	Railtrack	120000
Vodafone	230000	WPP	170000	General Elect.	130000	British Gas	110000
Burton	210000	Royal Bk Scotl	160000	National Grid	130000	Cable & Wire	100000

FTSE 100 Index hour by hour.

Open 4096.5 up 4.9	11.00 4092.8 up 0.3	14.00 na	
09.00 4100.3 up 7.8	12.00 4088.2 down 3.3	15.00 na	
10.00 4102.3 up 9.8	13.00 4091.0 down 1.5	16.00 na	
		Close na	

Government Securities

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Red Yld	Index Code
Index-linked						
[illegible]						
Undated						
[illegible]						
Shorts						
[illegible]						
Mediums						
[illegible]						
Longs						
[illegible]						

Rights Issues

Stock	Price	Chg
Allied Colloids	80pm	-1
Autect Associates	1pm	
Actis	4pm	
Bioscopes Ins	25.5pm	

Recent Issues

Stock	Price	Chg
Advanced Power Cos	10	
Aquarius	100p	
BDW Endowment Pref	95	
Bioscopes	240p	
Cell Telecom	20p	
Crown Leisure	97p	
Dawn Til Dusk	97p	
Kemtech Forestry	97p	
Henderson Tech/Co	94p	+1
Highway Systems Sys	100p	
Mann River	100p	
Ker Group	97p	
Linley	100p	
Nikoil	100p	
Oliver Ashworth	100p	
On Line	100p	
Oxford Biomedica	100p	
Parkwood Holdings	100p	
Pat Technologies	100p	
Polestar	100p	
RDR Defensive Systems	100p	
Red Hayward Hotels	100p	
Sunbuilder	75p	+0.5
Sutton Harbour	100p	
Xenova	100p	-1.5
Yorkton Group	100p	

The last 12 months have produced some of the most dramatic events in the history of sport. Here *Independent* writers recall moments of magic which will live long in the memory

FIVE DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

Saturday 9 November — Heroic Holyfield tames Tyson

Evander Holyfield shouldered his way through the horde that swarmed and shouted in the ring, and got to where he could look out at us, the people who doubted him and, yes, feared for his safety.

He did not climb like a squirrel onto the ropes, brandishing a still-gloved fist, shouting "eat your words", as the young Cassius Clay did after turning the odds upside down against Sonny Liston all those years ago. Holyfield simply held up one hand and smiled.

Nobody ever had a better right. All but one of 42 reporters polled by a Las Vegas newspaper had agreed that Mike Tyson would win easily and quickly.

The image we shared was of Holyfield being borne from the ring on his shield, a noble warrior in one fight too many. A horrid thught was that he might end up in hospital.

When Tyson and Holyfield went to their corners at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas on 11 November, most people considered the contest a mismatch. But before three rounds were completed you could sense that something quite remarkable was going of to happen.

Where Tyson had been expected to blast through Holyfield's short hooking style, he was being frustrated by hit and hold tactics. And it soon became clear that one of the most feared hitters in heavyweight history could not handle a rough contest.

Probably, doubt entered Holyfield's mind in the fifth when he was staggered by heavy punches. However, the next session altered things dramatically in his favour. A short left sent Tyson over and, when he regained his feet to take an eight count, a cut above the corner of his left eye was leaking blood.

It bled again in the seventh and, after sending Tyson to his corner for examination by a ringside doctor, the referee, Chuck Halpern, warned Holyfield, threatening to deduct a point unless he was more careful.

A curious thing came to me personally at this time. The further the contest went, the more Tyson appeared to shrink physically. By the eighth round, there was a smile on the underdog's face and he began speaking to Tyson, as though utterly confident of victory.

When the bell sounded to end the 10th round, all three official judges had Holyfield so far ahead that Tyson, who staggered back to his corner, could only win by a knock-out. Thirty seconds into the eleventh, Holyfield knew that he had pulled off one of the biggest upsets in boxing history when Halpern stepped in to end the contest.

To his immense credit, Tyson was gracious in defeat. "I want to commend you," he said to Holyfield. "I have the greatest respect for you. I want to shake you by the hand."

Was it that Tyson had not felt a serious blow to the head since before serving three years in prison – none of the four men he had subsequently fought landed a blow on him – or that he can no longer summon up those formidable powers that had spread terror throughout the heavyweight division? Was it simply that Holyfield fought above himself?

They will fight again to answer those prodding questions – and it will be a big one. The biggest.

Ken Jones

Sunday 14 April — Faldo hunts down Great White Shark

Augusta, the second Sunday in April. Turning off Washington Road, you leave behind the tack and tat of modern America and enter the fantasy land of Augusta National.

Let your imagination run riot and the script will not match the drama of events to come. On the morning of the final round of the US Masters, even the dogwood and azaleas tingle with anticipation.

Not this Sunday. The press room was hard at work. "Greg Norman yesterday buried the demons of Masters disasters past – Larry Mize et al – to become, at 41, the oldest first-time winner of a green jacket..." For those working against a five-hour time difference, the story was already written. In Australia, it was already rolling off the presses.

Everyone was unanimous. Not even the Great White Tadpole could lose this one from six in front. "Greg, not even you can muck this one up," the late lamented Peter Dobereiner told Norman on Saturday evening. If Dobereiner has ascended to a better place, Norman still does not have the key to the upstairs champions' locker room at Augusta.

That afternoon, Norman, who had equalled the course record with a 63 in the first round, took possession of the record for the biggest lead ever lost in a major championship. His pulled drive at the first hole, setting up a bogey, may have only cut his advantage over Nick Faldo from six to five shots, but it showed the Australian's game was just a fraction off. At Augusta, that is too much.

The course was playing hard and fast, the landing area for approach shots on the greens no more than five square feet (and not necessarily anywhere near the hole). While Norman went for the flags as usual, Faldo finessed his way into the target areas. While the overall result recalled the third round of the 1990 Open, Faldo recreated the brilliance of his last four holes (after he had let a comfortable lead slip to John Cook) at Muirfield in '92. Except he did it for all 18 holes.

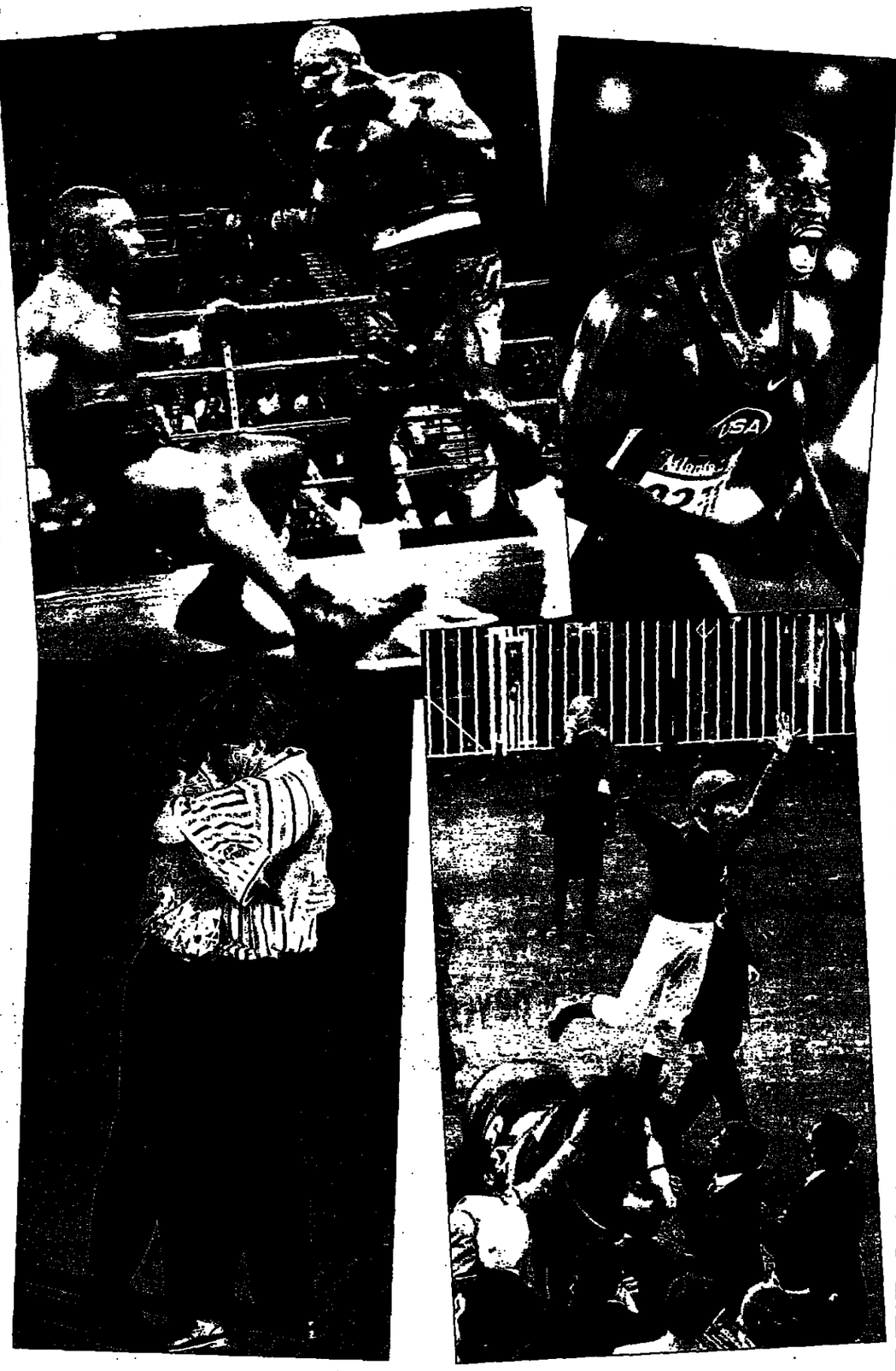
Six shots changed hands from the eighth to the 12th. Norman's approach spun off the front of the ninth green, his chip was too strong at the tenth and he missed from 18 inches at the next. At the short 12th, his tee shot was sucked into the water off the bank. Two ahead, Faldo produced an inspired two-iron at the par-five 13th, and when Norman again found water at the 16th it was all over.

Faldo shot a 67, the best score of the day, Norman a 78, an 11-shot swing. On the 18th, the adversaries embraced. "I told him I didn't know what to say, I just wanted to give him a hug," Faldo said.

Norman added: "What he said brought tears to my eyes. He's gone way up in my estimation." He added: "I played like shit". Two days later, he went ahead with a party on his yacht, Aussie Rules II. If his form has not quite recovered then, nor has Faldo's reached such a peak again. At the time Faldo said he hoped the day would be remembered for him winning, but realised that Norman losing would be the story.

Eight months later, Faldo said: "My final-round 67 is really being recognised now. It was one of the best rounds anyone has ever played in a major".

Andy Farrell



Five to savour (clockwise from top left): Evander Holyfield knocks down Mike Tyson on his way to the world heavyweight title; Michael Johnson celebrates victory in the Olympic 200m final; Frankie Dettori leaps into the record books with seven wins at Ascot; England players celebrate an Alan Shearer goal during the 4-1 drubbing of the Dutch at Euro 96; Nick Faldo consoles Greg Norman after the final round of the Masters Photographs: Allsport/PA

Thursday 1 August — A golden moment for golden shoes

You know the really big events in athletics because your heart tells you.

Boom, boom, boom, pounding in your chest, as Linford Christie prepares for the 1992 Olympic 100 metres final, as Jonathan Edwards speeds towards the take-off board at the 1995 world championships.

On 1 August this year, in the sticky evening heat of Atlanta's Centennial Stadium, there was a sense of anticipation which surpassed that of any the previous or subsequent Olympic track sessions.

Everything – the evening, the Games – seemed to centre on one man intent upon a historic achievement: Michael Johnson.

Men had won the 100 and 200 metres at the Games; Alberto Juantorena had taken gold at 400 and 800m in 1976; but no one had ever won the 200 and 400. After convincing officials to alter the schedule to allow him a decent shot at both, the 28-year-old Texan seemed to go out of his way to increase the pressure upon himself.

Four years earlier, as the world 200m champion, Johnson had failed to reach the Olympic final after his preparations had been ruined by food poisoning. Yet, after that devastating experience, here he was again in Atlanta, talking freely about his expectations, even running in golden shoes. Was this hubris about to be punished by the gods?

The first part of his ambition had been accomplished without undue strain three days earlier as he had won the 400m final against a field lacking the injured world record holder Butch Reynolds.

But this race was going to be different, due to the presence of Frankie Fredericks, a man in the form of his life. Two weeks before the Olympics had begun, the Namibian – a double silver medallist at the 1992 Games – had ended Johnson's unbroken sequence of 21 wins over 200m with a narrow victory in Oslo.

After being forced to settle for another silver in the 100m, where he had run to within 0.01sec of the world record earlier in the season, there seemed a possibility that Fredericks might just spoil Johnson's Olympics.

The gun went. A crowd of 82,000 people produced a deep, gathering roar. Boom, boom, boom. And as the two men completed their turn the possibility was still faintly there, even though the American – who runs so upright he seems about to fall over backwards – was ahead.

Then, like a spaceship switching to warp speed, Johnson parted company with his fellow athletes and embraced history.

When this urbane, quietly spoken man glanced across at the digital clock to see his winning time, his expression was almost crazed, 19.32 seconds, a full 0.34sec inside his own outstanding world record.

That earlier run had chipped 0.06sec of Pietro Mennea's 24-year-old mark of 19.72sec. Never before in the history of the event had the official record been lowered by more than 0.2sec.

Many observers felt the only comparable performance was Bob Beamon's stupendous 1968 Olympic long jump of 8.90 metres, which improved the world record by more than a foot. It was a defining moment of the 1996 Olympics.

Fredericks, meanwhile, ran the race of his life to finish in 19.68sec – four metres adrift. "I thought when Michael ran 19.66 it was incredible," Fredericks said. "To run 19.32. I don't know what to say.

There are 82,000 who will. "I was there."

Mike Rowbottom

Saturday 28 Sept — Seventh heaven for Dettori

The card for the first day of Ascot's Festival meeting, on 28 September, had a distinctly trappy look to it. As the clever trousers with their form books pored over the options on a particularly competitive afternoon, other, smaller, punters around the country had thought of a better system. They helped themselves to the bonsai biros of the local betting shops and kept writing the name of Frankie Dettori's mounts on their slips. Seven winners later they helped themselves again from the counter.

There were numerous reports of people wagering in coppers and picking up tidy cheques after the Italian's unique achievement. His efforts made him the only jockey to go through the card (at odds of 25,095-1) at a seven-race meeting in Britain. Only two men have ever gone through a six-race card.

If this feat had to be achieved, it was almost inevitable that it would gravitate to the man from Milan. His historic moment came just six years to the day after he rode his first Group One winner, on Markofdistinction, and during that time he has made more impression on the sport since a chap called Lester Piggott was in his pomp. One of them looks permanently as if his pet dog has died, the other is close to being annoyingly upbeat all the time without ever quite managing it.

Dettori's first winner at Ascot was on Wall Street, where, doubtlessly, he will have a growing portfolio as his earnings both in and out of the sport expand. Then came Diffident and Mark Of Esteem, in the big race of the day, the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes.

By the time Decorated Hero won the fourth, Dettori was beginning to assist the numerically challenged by holding up his digits to advertise the swelling achievement. The fingers kept flicking up as Fatefully, Lochangel and finally Fujiyama Crest galloped on to the manuscript of the record books.

It became as close to bonkers as a crowd at the Royal racecourse can get, and in the middle of them all was a little chap hosing his audience down from an immense champagne bottle. The trademark flying dismount had been heavily employed.

Since Dettori day the eponymous hero has barely had time to fit in sleep. Commemorative awards have been arriving by the crateload, his bottom has visited just about every chat-show host's settee – and he has even managed to ride a few more winners.

As for the bookmakers, 28 September 1996 was not the cataclysm they portrayed at the time. That lazy, and predictable, response detailed an occasion of unrecoverable penury. The full scale of this apocalypse was revealed recently when Coral announced their profits for the year.

Coral did not lose money in 1996. Following the nightmare that was Dettori day, their profits merely dwindled from £17m to just a million pounds less. They say the day cost them £4m, but are not willing to speculate on the free advertising or the size of the new influx of victims drawn to the betting shop. These bookmakers, as much as drama buffs, must thank Frankie Dettori for his unprecedented achievement.

Richard Edmondson

Tuesday 18 June — Dutch masters humiliated by rampant England

It was a magnificent evening for every Englishman, but for one spectator the 4-1 rout of the Dutch was a special night indeed. Phil Baynes is an English site engineer who was working on a project in the Netherlands. On the afternoon of Tuesday 18 June he flew back to London for the game, returning to work the following day.

"They were full of it," he recalled this week. "Dressed in orange and mouthing off about what they were going to do to us. At the airport they gave out orange scarves to everyone – I declined mine. I asked a few what they thought the score would be and a lot said 3-1 or 4-1. I don't think they envisaged it would be England getting the four.

"The flight back was a more sombre affair. I had my England shirt on and I was still bubbling. I was humming 'Three Lions'. No-one would meet my eye.

"At work they were all apologetic about qualifying after playing so badly. I then went on site with my shirt on, an England scarf, and with a big red cross and 4-1 written on my white hard hat. I had to rub the 4-1 off though after a big Dutch welder chased me with a hammer."

At this point Baynes, who is still working in the Netherlands and was speaking on the telephone, said he had better go – his work colleagues were getting fed up with being reminded. "They tell me: 'one win and you go on about it forever'."

It was a memorable night. When Wembley secured the right to be rebuilt as the new national stadium last week, its backers may have briefly cast their mind back to 18 June and offered a private vote of thanks to Terry Venables.

From welcoming the first, flag-waving arrivals, to bidding adieu to the last, tired but elated groundsman, the old lady of stadia had rocked as never before. After that the Football Association's vote was settled.

"I don't remember anything like it in '66 and there were more people in the ground then," Venables recalled. "It was wonderful against Scotland on the Saturday and I thought: 'How are they going to match that' – but they were even better."

Even before the rout began, the crowd were in full voice. "Three Lions" and the national anthem were belted out with gusto to a sea of red-and-white flags of St George. Then England played with a style and panache even their most ardent supporters had not dared hope for. Most, indeed, had merely hoped for a stalemate, knowing that a draw would send both teams into the quarter-finals.

The Dutch had problems and were not the same team which had been made competition favourites when first drawn with England in December. Edgar Davids had been sent home, Marc Overmars had not arrived, Patrick Kluivert was struggling for fitness, Dennis Bergkamp was unhappy playing at centre-forward. But they were still a very good team.

England had their own worries. A scrappy draw with Switzerland had been followed by an unconvincing win over Scotland. Teddy Sheringham and Darren Anderton were searching for form, Tony Adams was playing in pain. They had not beaten the Dutch in five meetings since 1982.

Terry Venables kept faith with the same XI that played the Swiss and Scots but rearranged them into the "Christmas tree" with Sheringham and Steve McManaman playing off Alan Shearer. Vindication arrived in the 23rd minute as Danny Blind brought down Paul Ince after McManaman's run. Shearer, who had already had a shot kicked off the line, buried the penalty.

The turning points came five minutes either side of the break. First David Seaman denied Bergkamp with a splendid reaction save low to his left. Then Sheringham twisted to head in Gascoigne's corner.

Eleven minutes later it was 4-0. Gascoigne's dribble, and Sheringham's immaculately disguised pass, set up Shearer. Then Sheringham pounced after Erwin van der Sar spilled Anderton's shot.

"The atmosphere was incredible," recalled another in the crowd, Bob Burgess, who had driven up from Somerset. "It was a mixture of shock and delight. All the way up I had convinced myself it would be 0-0. We could not believe that we could play that well." The reaction in the press box was similar.

Meanwhile, at Villa Park, Scottish fans watching the match with Switzerland found themselves cheering England's progress. For 16 heady minutes they thought they, too, would qualify.

A late goal from Kluivert put the Scots out but it could not prevent the Netherlands' heaviest defeat for 20 years. "Everything happened exactly as Terry Venables said it would," recalled Sheringham afterwards.

Glenn Moore

sport

Lacroix has credentials to kick Quins into shape

Rugby Union
CHRIS HEWETT

The United Nations off-shoot commonly known as Harlequins – or, more correctly in this multi-cultural and business-conscious age, NEC Harlequins in deference to the London club's Japanese sponsors – grows more exotic by the day. Thierry Lacroix, the most relentlessly accurate goalkicker in last year's World Cup, is about to pitch up at The Stoop via the French rugby hotbed of Dax and the South African citadel of Durban.

Lacroix, who has agreed in principle to a 30-month deal worth an estimated £250,000 and is now waiting for formal clearance from the various governing bodies who still own a piece of him, has been pencilled in for a derby debut against Wasps tomorrow week. He is unquestionably a major capture, if only because he will add steel to Quins' notoriously fragile kicking game; indeed, he may well do everyone a service by nipping in the bud Will Carling's fledgling career as a marksman.

But as Quins may well discover when they take on the League leaders, Leicester, on home turf today – a game they must win to breathe new life into their own faltering title ambitions – the signing of the season belongs to the Tigers. It is becoming increasingly clear that Bob Dwyer, the Australian World Cup-winning coach who moved to Welford Road during the summer, has succeeded in adding a genuine cutting edge to the Leicester juggernaut. By so doing, he has made them the team to beat in all three leading competitions, the Courage Championship, the Heineken European Cup and the Pilkington Cup.

Not that Dwyer considers the job even half-done. On the contrary, he almost damns his side with faint praise. There are no grand claims and talk of the fact that Leicester are on top of the domestic pile and favourites to beat the champions Toulouse in next weekend's European Cup semi-finals. "We move the ball quite nicely at times and by the end of the season I hope we'll be a reasonable side," he said yesterday. "By the end of next season we may almost be quite good." Calm down, Bob. Don't get carried away.

As usual with Dwyer, there is some clever psychology going on here. He knows full well that Leicester possess the outstanding pack in English rugby and is even more impressed by their defensive commitment – he actually uses the word "outstanding" in that respect, which is something of a departure. But he does not like complacency in any shape or form and, with a solid month of crucial matches ahead of him, the comfort zone is no place to be.

"I'm sure that the players would be intensely disappointed if they were to find themselves without a trophy come May," he said. "But I don't want them to think in those terms. The only way to approach the game is to concentrate on improvement, both individual and collective. While I believe there is a lot more dynamism and variety to this side than at the start of the campaign – the ball skills are a little better and the confidence higher – we are not yet close to where I want us to be."

Dwyer was forced into two late changes yesterday after losing his outside-half Rob Liley and his centre Stuart Potter to shoulder injuries. Niall Malone takes over the pivot role while Leon Lloyd moves inside from the left wing to partner the blossoming Will Greenwood in midfield. That allows Rory Underwood, the most-capped player in English history, to emerge from the shadows of second-string rugby and, Dwyer hopes, to release his pent-up frustrations on Carling and company.

With the spotlight shining even more brightly on the international brigade rather than any home-grown players who might just drag England out of the doldrums, it is fitting that François Pienaar should make his debut for Saracens against the hapless strugglers from Orrell today.

South Africa's former captain – dumped by Andre Markgraaff, the Springbok coach, to the astonishment of Nelson Mandela, no less – teams up with Michael Lynagh, Philippe Sella and sundry Celts in a side that might, a year or so ago, have been fielded by the Barbarians.

Of far more interest to national selectors, both from Wales and those in the early stages of piecing together a Lions squad for the summer series in Pienaar's backyard, is a possible return of Gwyn Jones, the outstanding openside flanker in the four home countries, in today's match between Cardiff and Pontypridd.

Jones, a Llanelli player last season, dislocated his shoulder during the last Welsh tour of Australia and has yet to play for his new club, but if he comes back with a bang this afternoon – Cardiff had made no final decision yesterday – it will be of more obvious benefit to British rugby than anything Lacroix or any other foreign import might achieve.

McGrath has Lara's measure

Cricket
TONY COZIER
reports from Melbourne
Australia 219
West Indies 233-9

With their tall, lean, mean fast bowler Glenn McGrath again to the fore, Australia regained the initiative from a tentative West Indies on the second day of the Third Test yesterday. Hardly delivering a loose ball in 21 overs of sustained pace and accuracy in the day, McGrath dictated terms from the start to batsmen overly concerned with carefully building the kind of lead the West Indies require to win the match and keep their interest in the series alive. He finished with 5 for 40 from 27 overs.

The West Indies ended the day 14 runs ahead and, as they have to bat last on a pitch already showing signs of wear after two cloudless days of sunshine, they face an enormous challenge simply to remain in contention.

Among McGrath's victims was Brian Lara for the fourth time in five innings in the series, a sequence that prompted the bowler's not unrealistic assessment afterwards that he had got the celebrated left-hander's measure.

Lara was caught at second slip for two, cutting at the 18th ball he faced. It was the third successive time he had fallen for a single figure score to McGrath, and was a significant handicap to the West Indies' suspect batting that had demoted him in the order to No 4 in the hope that he would have the cushion of a reasonable start to regain lost touch.

"The answer is to keep it tight at him," McGrath said. "He likes to play his shots and he'll give you a chance."

From over the wicket or round, that has been the Australian plan to Lara since the 1995 series in the Caribbean, when they regained the Frank Worrell Trophy after 18 years in West Indies' possession. In his last 11 innings against Australia, Lara has managed only one half-century.

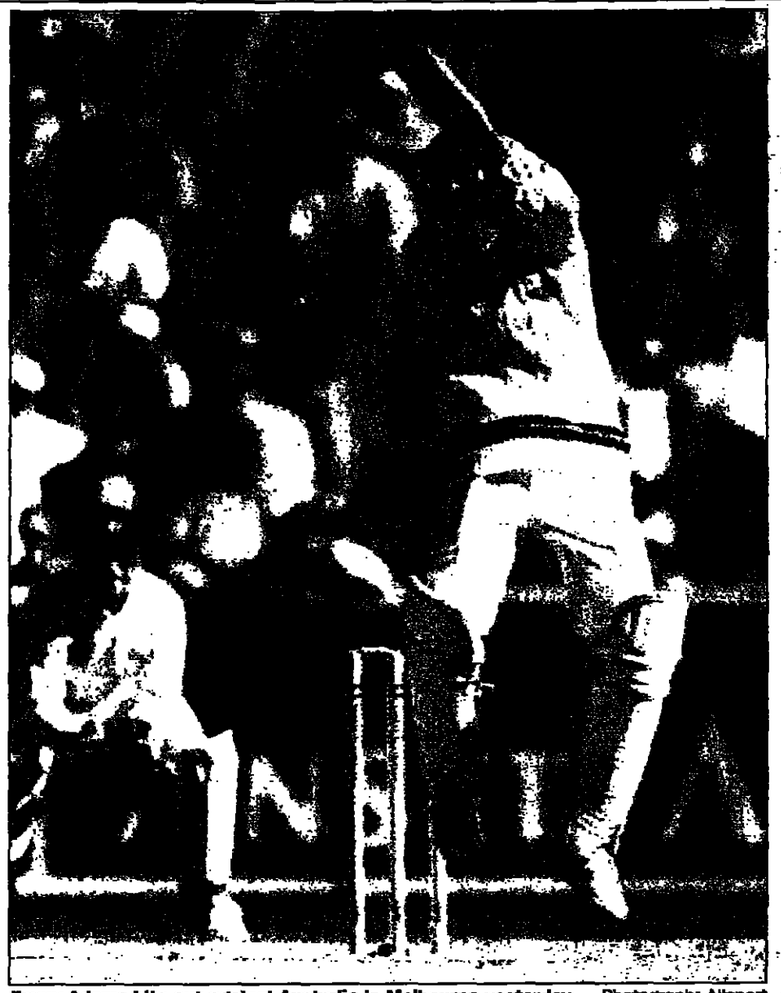
McGrath's efforts made up for the loss of his fellow paceman, Jason Gillespie, who strained a side muscle during his second over yesterday. He will not bowl again in this Test and is doubtful for his hometown Test in Adelaide on 25 January.

The pattern for the day was established in the first hour when the overnight pair, the left-handers Robert Samuels and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, were restricted by the miserly bowling and sharp fielding to 21 runs off 15 overs.

Samuels managed only two scoring strokes from his 57 balls before he edged his drive off Shane Warne to be smartly taken, low to his left at slip, by Mark Taylor.

Lara followed five minutes before lunch and, when Carl Hooper ran himself out soon afterwards and Chanderpaul's untroubled but pedestrian 58 was ended after three and a half hours by McGrath's left-handed return catch, the West Indies were tottering at 107 for 5.

It took a cricketer of no particular repute but a wholehearted, uncomplicated attitude to free them from their self-imposed shackles, but Junior Murray's brave counter-attack and his partnership of 90 for the sixth wicket with Jimmy Adams came too late for a complete revival.


Jimmy Adams hits out against Australia in Melbourne yesterday Photograph: Allsport

Murray, back in place of Courtney Browne for the first time in a Test since the series against England in the summer of 1995, immediately stamped his authority on proceedings, crashing an off-driven boundary off McGrath as fiercely as any ball was struck in the innings and hoisting Warne over long-on for another four.

Boosted by his swashbuckling 86 in the World Series one-day international against Pakistan last week, Murray attacked with the same positive effect and, with Adams his steady partner, soon put bowling and fielding that had seemed so restraining into perspective.

He came unstuck against the second new ball when his compulsion to hook led to his dismissal from a top-edged stroke that was caught at long leg off McGrath.

Adams remained to the end, unbeaten 54 after a dogged vigil of three and three quarter hours but others kept falling and Australia ended the day in the happier position.

Second day: Australia won toss
AUSTRALIA – First Innings 219 (G S Blewett 62; C E L Ambrose 5-56).
WEST INDIES – First Innings
(Overnight 29 for 1)
R G Samuels c Taylor b Warne 17
S Chanderpaul c and b McGrath 58
B C Lara c Warne b McGrath 2
C L Hooper run out 7
J C Adams not out 54
†J R Murray c Reiffel b McGrath 53
I R Bishop lbw b McGrath 0
C E L Ambrose b Warne 6
K C G Benjamin b Reiffel 11
*C A Walsh not out 2
Extras (lb7 b4 nb3) 14
Total (for 9, 103 overs) 233
Fall (cont): 2-62, 3-71, 4-86, 5-107, 6-197, 7-197, 8-215, 9-230.
Bowling: McGrath 27-10-40-5; Reiffel 29-8-76-1 (nb3); Warne 28-3-80-2; Gillespie 3-2-5-0; Blewett 9-3-19-0; S R Waugh 10-5-22-0.
Umpires: S Venkataraghavan (India) and P Parker (Aus).

Donald blazes through India

South Africa 235 and 164-4
India 100

After Donald gave South Africa a stranglehold on the first Test against India in Durban yesterday, Donald, spearheading a four-pronged pace attack, took 5 for 40 as India were routed for 100 in 39.1 overs – their lowest five-day total against the South Africans.

It gave South Africa a first-innings lead of 135, and the opener Andrew Hudson, who top-scored with 80 first time around, and Adam Bacher built on that with a second-wicket partnership of 111 as the home side closed on 164 for 4 in their second innings. Hudson (52) batted authoritatively for his second fifty of the match and Bacher, on his Test debut, made a composed 55 for South Africa to establish a lead of 299 going into the third day.

While India had the better of the first day in dismissing South Africa for 235, their batsmen struggled yesterday against a quartet who took advantage of a pitch offering pace and bounce. Donald, forced to quit the recent series in India midway through the second Test due to a heel injury, bowled with hostility to collect his seventh five-wicket haul at Test level. He was well supported by both Shaun Pollock and Brian McMillan, who took two wickets each.

No Indian batsman reached 20 as they were dismissed for the third-lowest Test total compiled at Kingsmead Cricket Ground, after Australia's 75 and South Africa's 99 in the same match during the 1949-50 series.

Saurav Ganguly had the highest score of 16 but the key wicket was that of the Indian captain Sachin Tendulkar. From successive deliveries he dispatched Donald to the boundary but next ball he was comprehensively beaten by a rapid off-cutter to be bowled through the gate for 15.

Second day: India won toss
SOUTH AFRICA – First Innings 235 (A Hudson 80; B K V Prasad 5-60)
INDIA – First Innings
(Overnight 2-0)
V Rathore c Hudson b Donald 7
W V Raman b Pollock 0
S Ganguly c Kirsten b Pollock 16
*S R Tendulkar b Donald 15
M Azharuddin c Bacher b McMillan 15
R S Dravid lbw b McMillan 7
†N R Mongia c Richardson b Donald 4
A Kumble not out 13
J Srinath c Cullinan b Donald 0
D Johnson c Bacher b Donald 3
B K V Prasad c Richardson b Klusener 4
Extras (b4 lb3 nb7 w2) 16
Total (39.1 overs) 100
Fall: 1-2, 2-22, 3-36, 4-52, 5-68, 6-74, 7-74, 8-74, 9-88.
Bowling: Donald 16-5-40-5 (1w); Pollock 8-2-18-2 (5nb); Klusener 7.1-2-8-1 (2nb); McMillan 8-2-27-2 (1w).
SOUTH AFRICA – Second Innings
A C Hudson c Tendulkar b Kumble 52
G Kirsten c Dravid b Prasad 2
A M Bacher c Tendulkar b Kumble 55
D J Cullinan c Mongia b Prasad 3
*W J Cronje not out 17
H H Gibbs not out 25
Extras (b5 lb2 nb3) 10
Total (for 4) 164
Fall: 1-4, 2-115, 3-120, 4-120.
To bat: B M McMillan, †S M Pollock, †D M Richardson, L Klusener, A A Donald.
Bowling (so far): Srinath 15-3-42-0 (1nb); Prasad 15-2-49-2; Johnson 9-1-39-0 (2nb); Kumble 10-3-19-2; Ganguly 2-0-8-0.

Hollioake fights on

Surrey's Ben Hollioake was the lone star as England faltered against Pakistan in the third Under-19 Test in Lahore yesterday.

Having bowled out Pakistan for 237, the stage was set for England to build on the earlier successes of the three-match series, which they lead 1-0. Despite a promising start, the batsmen failed to dominate the seamer Abdul Razzaq or the leg-spinner Imran Tahir and were 167 for 7 at the close. It was left to Hollioake, who had bowled superbly for figures of 6 for 40 off 22.4 overs, to show the specialist batsmen the way. He was 44 not out at stumps.

The day had started well for Hollioake – he claimed the Pakistan captain Ahmar Saeed for 77, then mopped up the tail with two wickets in two balls.

THIRD UNDER-19 TEST (Lahore, second day): Pakistan 237 (S Ameer 77; B Hollioake 6-40); England 167 for 7 (B Hollioake 44 no).

Nevill on look-out for talent

Hockey
BILL COLWILL

The traditional youth tournaments hold the stage this weekend, with pride of place going to the women's Under-21 territorial event at the Milton Keynes National Hockey Stadium from today until Monday.

With England having qualified for the Junior World Cup to be held in Korea in September, this year's Under-21 competition will be of particular importance. It will give coach Mary Nevill an early opportunity to assess potential players under tournament conditions, although the weather in Seoul is guaranteed to be much more favourable for hockey than that expected at Milton Keynes.

The Midlands, who won all three titles last year, can again be expected to dominate, with the Olton club likely to make an impact. The club, runaway leaders in Division One of the National League, supplies four top players for the Midlands Under-21 – the Wright sisters, Lucilla and Sally, along with Kerry Moore and their captain Jennie Bimson. There are three more in the Under-18s, including Gabi Godwin, who last year while playing for her school, King Edward VII Birmingham, scored the first goal at the National Stadium.

The Men's Under-17 and Under-15 tournament at Bristol will feature a number of players who have already made their debuts in the National League.

Two days into last year's tournament the icy weather stopped play, with the Midlands on top in both age-groups. Again they are likely to be to the fore but the dark horses for the senior title could be the South West, coached by Teddington's John Barrett, who include Reading's Jonny Loose and Surbiton's Jody Smith.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

■ We murdered them and they know it. We flippin' hammered them. **David Lloyd**, the England coach, after his team's draw with Zimbabwe in the first Test.

■ When you are trying to save a Test match, you try every trick in the book. **Alistair Campbell**, the Zimbabwe captain, defends his country's negative bowling.

■ I can't explain why our batsmen kept getting themselves out. **Lloyd** after England's batting collapse on the first day of the second Test.

■ We are always protected by 10 bodyguards. **Boris Becker**, the German tennis player, who may leave his country to live in the United States because of fears for his family's security.

■ I would doubt the record will be broken in the modern game. **Peter Shilton**, who made his 1,000th Football League appearance when he played for Leyton Orient against Brighton last Sunday.

■ English players have a natural gift for running but, as for explosiveness and reaction time, they can't match the Italians. In soccer you have to do more than run. **Middlesbrough's Fabrizio Ravanelli.**

TODAY'S NUMBER

18

All 18 members of the Nigerian football squad announced in Lagos yesterday for next month's World Cup qualifier in Kenya are with overseas clubs: 16 from Europe, one from the United States and one from South Africa.

WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

TODAY

Football

Matches not on pools coupons; 3.0 unless stated; subject to pitch inspections

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE: Altrincham v Bromsgrove Rovers; Farnborough v Dover; Gateshead v Halifax; Kidderminster Harriers v Bath City; Northwich Victoria v Morecambe; Southport v Hednesford; Stalybridge Celtic v Rushden & Diamonds; Stevenage v Hayes; Telford v Welling; Woking v Slough.

ICIS LEAGUE Premier Division: Yeovil v Grays. **First Division:** Tooting & Mitcham United v Leyton Pennant; Whyteleafe v Berkhamsted Town. **Second Division:** Barking v Chalfont St Peter; Metropolitan Police v Cheshunt; Wembley v Edgware. **Third Division:** Epsom & Ewell v Wingate & Finchley.

UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division: Bamber Bridge v Blyth Spartans; Bishop Auckland v Barrow; Boston Utd v Spennymoor; Chorley v Buxton; Frickley v Atherton Town; Guiseley v Emley; Knowsley v Gainsborough; Lancaster v Marine; Leek Town v Colwyn Bay; Runcorn v Accrington Stanley; Winsford Utd v Hyde Utd. **First Division:** Bradford Park Avenue v Matlock Town; Congleton Town v Curzon Ashton; Droylsden v Gretna; Eastwood Town v Lincoln United; Great Harwood Town v Leigh; Netherfield v Flixton; Radcliffe Borough v Warrington Town; Stocksbridge PS v Ashton United; Whitley Bay v Harrogate Town; Workington v Atherton LR; Worksop Town v Farsley Celtic.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Division: Atherstone v Gloucester City; Baldock Town v Gravesend & Northfleet; Cambridge City v Ashford Town; Chelmsford v Sudbury Town; Cheltenham v Nuneaton; Crawley Town v Burton; Dorchester v Hastings; Grantham v Rugby Town; Hitchin v Hinckley Town; Moor Green v Redditch Utd; Paget Rangers v Shepshed Dynamo; Racing Club Warwick v Raunds Town; Rothwell Town v VS Rugby; Stourbridge v Sutton Coldfield Town; Tamworth v Stafford Rangers. **Southern Division:** Cinderford Town v Tonbridge Town; Cirencester v Fareham Town; Clevedon Town v Bashley; Dartford v Buckingham Town; Fisher Athletic v Yate; Fleet v Margate; Havant v Erith & Belvedere; Newport IoW v Weston-super-Mare; St Leonards Stamcroft v Forest Green; Waterlooville v Weymouth; Witney v Tonbridge Angels.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Arundel v Southwick; Hailsham Town v Wick; Hassocks v Horsham; Mile Oak v Langney Sports; Oakwood v Peacehaven & Telscombe; Pagham v Burgess Hill Town; Portfield v Three Bridges; Saltdean United v Ringmer; Shoreham v Eastbourne Town; Whitehawk v Selsey.

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE Premier Division: Bourne v Cogenhoe; Desborough v Boston Town; Eynesbury v Kempston; Ford Sports v Wellingborough; Holbeach v Wootton; Long Buckby v St Neots; Potton v Minkies Blackstone; Spalding v Northampton Spencer; Stamford v Newport Pagnell; Stotfold v Stewarts & Lloyds Corby.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division: Bideford v Torrington; Chippenham Town v Bridport.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division: Denaby v Selby; Glasshoughton Welfare v Sheffield; Hallam v Arnold Town; Hatfield Main v Ossett Albion; Hucknall Town v Armthorpe Welfare; Liversedge v Ashfield United; North Ferriby v Belper Town; Ossett Town v Maltby MW; Pickering v Brigg; Thackley v Pontefract.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Division: Blackpool Rovers v Bootle; Burscough v Rossendale; Clitheroe v Nantwich; Holker Old Boys v Chadderton; Kidsgrove v Eastwood Hanley; Mossley v Atherton Collieries; Newcastle Town v Penrith; Prescot Cables v Maine Road; Salford City v Darwen; Trafford v St Helens Town; *Vauxhall GM v Glossop North End.*

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: BAT Sports v Lymington; Bemerton Heath Harlequins v Eastleigh; East Cowes Vics v Romsey; Gosport v Brockenhurst; Petersfield v Aerostructures; Portsmouth RN v Wimborne; Ryde Sports v Bournemouth; Thatcham v Cowes Sports; Whitchurch v Totton.

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Division: Bury Town v Harwich & Parkeston; Clacton Town v Stowmarket Town; Felixstowe v Lowestoft Town; Gorleston v Halstead Town; March v Hadleigh United; Newmarket Town v Diss Town; Sudbury Wanderers v Soham Town Rangers; Tiptree Utd v Wisbech Town; Warboys Town v Great Yarmouth Town; Wroxham v Woodbridge Town.

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Bloxwich Town v Stapenhill; Boldmere St Michaels v Barwell; Bridgnorth v Stretford Town; Cheadown v Shifnal; Halesowen Harriers v Sandwell Borough; Hinckley Athletic v Pershore Town; Pelsall Villa v Knypersley Victoria; Rocester v Blakenall.

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE First Division: Bedlington Terriers v Shildon; Billingham Synthonia v RTM Newcastle; Dunston Federation v Tow Law Town; Durham City v Chester-le-Street; Easington v Murton; Morpeth Town v Stockton; South Shields v Guisborough Town; West Auckland v Seaham Red Star; Whickham v Crook Town.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Beckenham Town v Herne Bay; Canterbury City v Furness; Cray Wanderers v Ramsgate; Folkestone Invicta v Corinthian; Greenwich Borough v Chatham Town; Hythe United v Deal Town; Thamesmead Town v Crockenhill; Tunbridge Wells v Slade Green; Whitstable Town v Sheppey United; Woolwich Town v Faversham Town.

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Buckie Thistle v Deveronvale; Clachnacuddin v Fort William; Cove Rangers v Huntly; Keith v Rothes; Lossiemouth v Elgin City; Nairn County v Forres Mechanics; Peterhead v Fraserburgh; Wick Academy v Brora Rangers.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth v Flint; Briton Ferry v Ebbw Vale; Caernarfon Town v Connah's Quay (2.30); Carmarthen Town v Holywell; *Conwy v Newtown; Cwmbran v* Cemaes Bay; Inter Cable-Tel Cardiff v Welshpool (2.30); Porthmadog v Barry Town; Rhyl v Caersws; Ton Pentre v Bangor City.

IRISH LEAGUE COCA-COLA FLOODLIT CUP First round first leg: Ballyclare v Linfield; Ballymena v Glenavon; Bangor v Ards; Carrick v Glentoran; Distillery v Cliftonville; Larne v Crusaders; Newry v Coleraine; Omagh Town v Portadown.

HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND Premier Division: Finn Harps v Shelbourne (7.30); Sligo Rovers v Derry City (7.30).

Rugby League

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP First round: Mayfield v Eccles (2.0); Wigan St Judes v Wigan Rose BR (2.0); Wigan St Patricks v Halton Simms Cross (2.30); Saddleworth v Elland (2.30); Dewsbury Moor v Upton & Hickley (2.0); Ovenden v Hensingham (2.0).

Rugby Union

3.0 unless stated

COURAGE CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP National League One: Harlequins v Leicester (2.15); London Irish v West Hartlepool; Saracens v Orrell; Wasps v Northampton; (at Loftus Road). **National League Two:** Nottingham v Bedford; Richmond v Coventry; *Rotherham v Blackheath* (2.15); Wakefield v Moseley (2.30); Waterloo v Newcastle (2.15). **Postponed:** Rugby v London Scottish. **National League Three:** Fylde v Leeds (2.15); Havant v Harrogate (2.30); Liverpool St Helens v Exeter (2.30); London Welsh v Clifton (2.30); Morley v Lydney; Otley v Wharfedale (2.15); Reading v Rosslyn Park (2.0); Redruth v Walsall (2.30). **National League Four North:** Aspatria v Worcester (2.15) (at Beacon Hill School); Hereford v Kendal (2.30); Nuneaton v Stoke-on-Trent (2.30); Sandal v Lichfield (2.15); Sheffield v Manchester (2.30); Stourbridge v Preston Grasshoppers (2.30); Winnington Park v Birmingham and Solihull (2.30). **National League Four South:** Camberley v Newbury (2.30); Charlton Park v Henley (2.30); Cheltenham v Barking (2.30); Tabard v High Wycombe (2.30); Weston-S-Mare v Met Police. **Postponed:** Askeans v Plymouth; North Walsham v Bury Hill.

SWALEC CUP Fifth round: Blackwood v Hirwaun (2.30).

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE First Division: Bridgend v Treorchy (2.30); Cardiff v Pontypridd (2.30); Dunvant v Caerphilly (2.30); Neath v Llanelli (2.30); Newbridge v Ebbw Vale (2.30); Newport v Swansea (2.30). **Second Division:** Aberavon v UWIC (Cardiff Inst) (2.30); Abertillery v Llandovery (2.30); Cross Keys v Bonymaen (2.30); Maesteg v Ystradgynlais (2.30); Pontypool v Abercynon (2.30); South Wales Police v Blackwood (2.30).

CLUB MATCHES: Ayr v Wigtownshire (2.0); Boroughmuir v Edinburgh Wanderers (2.0); East Kilbride v Currie (2.0); Forrester FP v Corstorphine (2.0); Glasgow HK v Kilmarnock (2.0); Gala v Stewart's Melville FP (2.0); Glasgow Acads v Melrose (2.0); Glasgow Southern v West of Scotland (2.0); Glenrothes v Madras Coll FP (2.0); Haddington v Preston Lodge (2.0); Kelso v Airdrie (2.0); Kirkcaldy v Stirling County (2.0); Langholm v Jed-Forest (2.0); Peebles v Biggar (2.0).

Hockey

RL HOLLAND MEMORIAL MATCH: Cheam v *President's XI (12.0) (at L' Ground, Cheam).*

HA UNDER-17 AND UNDER-15 DIVISIONAL TOURNAMENT (10.0-5.0) (at *Clifton College and University of West of England grounds, Bristol).*

AEWHA UNDER-21 TERRITORIAL TOURNAMENT: East v Midlands (9.30); South v West *(11.30); North v East (1.30) (at Milton Keynes Stadium).*

AEWHA UNDER-18 AND UNDER-16 TOURNAMENTS (1.30-6.0) (at *Milton Keynes Club, Woughton).*

Basketball

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: *Derby v Leicester* (7.30); Worthing v Newcastle (8.0).

NATIONAL LEAGUE First Division Men: Guildford v Cardiff.

Ice hockey

SUPERLEAGUE: Bracknell Bees v Manchester Storm (6.0); Sheffield Steelers v *Nottingham Panthers (6.40).*

PREMIER LEAGUE: Peterborough Pirates v Guildford Flames (5.30); Slough Jets v Medway Bears (6.3); Solihull Blaze v *Kingston Hawks (5.30); Swindon IceLords* v Telford Tigers (5.30).

NORTHERN PREMIER: Castlereagh Knights v Blackburn Hawks (6.0).

Other sports

ATHLETICS: Bupa Cross-country International (Dorham).

SNOOKER: Dr Martens European League (Diamond Centre, Irthlingborough).

TOMORROW

Football

FAI HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier Division: Bohemians v Home Farm; Everton (3.15); Cork City v St Patricks Ath (2.0); UCD v Bray Wanderers (3.15).

Rugby League

FRIENDLY MATCHES: Hull v York (3.0); Oldham v Swinton (3.0).

Rugby Union

3.0 unless stated

TOUR MATCH: Caerphilly v Italy.

SRU INTER DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIP: Caledonia v Edinburgh (2.30) *(at Murrayfield);* Glasgow v Scottish Borders (2.0) *(at New Anniesland).*

COURAGE CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP National League One: Bristol v Gloucester; Sale v Bath.

Hockey

HA UNDER-17 AND UNDER-15 DIVISIONAL TOURNAMENT: (10.0-5.0) *(at Clifton College and University of West of England grounds, Bristol).*

AEWHA UNDER-21 TERRITORIAL TOURNAMENT: South v Midlands (9.30); West v North (11.30); East v South (1.30); Midlands v North (3.30) *(at Milton Keynes Stadium).*

AEWHA UNDER-18 AND UNDER-16 TOURNAMENTS: (11.30-6.0) *(at Milton Keynes Club, Woughton).*

Basketball

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Birmingham v Thames Valley (7.0); Chester v Worthing (6.0); Manchester v Derby (7.0); Sheffield v Leopards (5.30).

Ice hockey

SUPERLEAGUE: Nottingham Panthers v Newcastle Cobras (7.0).

PREMIER LEAGUE: Guildford Flames v Slough Jets (6.0); Kingston Hawks v Solihull Blaze (5.45); Medway Bears v Swindon IceLords (5.15); Telford Tigers v Peterborough Pirates (5.30).

NORTHERN PREMIER: Whitley Warriors v Blackburn Hawks (6.0).

Other sports

DARTS: WDC World Championship (Purfleet, Essex).

SNOOKER: Dr Martens European League (Diamond Centre, Irthlingborough).

هكذا من الأصل

Irish celebrate a Merry Christmas

Richard Edmondson reports on the rich quality of competition at Leopardstown

It may have been that the fair citizens of Fishguard, Anglesey and Barrow-in-Furness have begun to hear sniggering coming from over the water in the last few days. While Britain's racing has been locked into cold storage, Ireland (which is constantly reminded about its shabby weather) has been going about its business quite normally.

Neither has the fare over the Irish Sea been unpalatable fodder. The Leopardstown Christmas festival has already witnessed the rehabilitation of the nation's favourite racehorse, Danoli, and yesterday there was another potential Cheltenham parade at the course that was modelled on Sandown and mercifully has not been brought up to date with introduction of frost.

When Santa packed his sleigh he clearly left just about all the baggage space for Richard Dunwoody, who followed up his win in the King George VI Chase with victory on Merry Gale at the Dublin track. Jim Dreaper's gelding has taken some time to return to the intimidating opponent he was two seasons ago, but the trainer attributes this to a prolonged recuperation from a breathing operation. "He was hobdayed as a two-year-old and gradually tissue decay set in in on his larynx," Dreaper said. "So the vet had to cut away the bad tissue and tie back the rest. The horse still can't sing but hopefully he can breathe better."

Merry Gale's win came at the main expense of the Queen Mother Champion chaser, Klairon Davis, whose Cheltenham exploits have not earned him any preferential treatment if Francis Woods' meaty smacks on the way into the home straight were any evidence. Klairon Davis has now failed on his first three starts this season, but as he was asked to give Merry Gale 15lb he hardly returned to booing.

There was also the opportunity for Istabraq to display why he is such a strong fancy to emulate his stablemate Urubande and capture the Sun Alliance Hurdle at the Festival. With the four-year-old's pedigree – he is by Sadler's Wells out of Betty's Secret, the mother of the 1984 Derby winner, Secreto – he should be answering the front door at a breeding den dressed in a smoking jacket. There is one thing that stops him achieving this, however, possibly even two, and they are both missing.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Quango
(Newcastle 3.30)
NB: Thursday Night
(Newcastle 2.30)

Istabraq no longer runs around in the blue colours of Hamdan Al Maktoum for John Gosden, but he is not making a bad fist of his new career with Aidan O'Brien and does not appear to resent the surgery that has been performed on him. The gelding has probably had harder workouts on the Limekilns than yesterday's race.

There was also a qualifier for the Festival's Cheltenham Gold Card Final, which are always intriguing contests for attempting to find the one horse out of 30 that is actually trying. Miltonfield, the Irish Cesarewitch winner, was handled so tenderly by Conor O'Dwyer here that it looked a blatant "not-off". But then he came through and won.

Leopardstown's feast continues this afternoon with four televised races, including one which will tell us whether Tom Doran was bonkers to resist a bid of £300,000 for his novice chaser, Dorans Pride, earlier this month. The money race is the £50,000 Ericsson Chase, which is rather less compelling now that the Gold Cup winner, Imperial Call, is a non-runner. Fergie Sutherland, the gelding's trainer, believes his seven-year-old has yet to recover from his last-fence fall at Punchestown earlier this month. This uninspiring medical bulletin did not prevent Ladbrokes cutting Imperial Call's odds from 9-2 to 4-1 for the Gold Cup yesterday.

While the resumption of turf racing on Britain hinges on an inspection at Newcastle this morning, moves have already been taken to replace some of the Chrsitmas baubles that have already fallen. A £15,000 added race is to be staged at Uttoxeter on New Year's Day to replace Wetherby's abandoned Castleford Chase, while a version of Kempton's lost Christmas Hurdle will be held at Sandown a week today.

The eventual winner, Albaha (light colours), is an early leader at Southwell yesterday Photograph: Peter Jay

Bay to face Alderbrook

Collier Bay and Alderbrook could face each other next Saturday in a rematch of the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham in March where the former came out the better.

The pairs' connections are likely to be attracted by the Pertemps Hurdle, arranged following yesterday's abandonment of Kempton, which will be added to the card at Sandown. Collier Bay was never entered in the Kempton contest, but is suited by Sandown's track.

LEOPARDSTOWN

HYPERION'S TV TIPS

1.05: NOBLE THYNE can take this. Although this gelding's future is likely to be over fences he has shown his prowess over the smaller obstacles, including a head victory over Istabraq, an impressive winner here yesterday.

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1.35: DORANS PRIDE is on offer at around 16-1 for the Gold Cup at Cheltenham but not everyone went overboard over his victory at Fairyhouse a month ago, where he jumped adequately, rather than in the style of a novice bound for high status. Michael Hourigan's seven-year-old will need to put today's rivals firmly in their place to justify his lofty reputation.

2.05: What A Question is a battle-hardened mare who is invariably difficult to beat on this ground. She stayed on dourly at Newbury last month to win a three-mile event from ANTAPOURA. Aidan O'Brien's four-year-old was beaten under two lengths into second place that day but revews rivalry on 12lb better terms. That should enable the filly to take revenge today.

2.40: Arthur Moore, who saddled Wylde Hyde to finish second in yesterday's even more valuable Paddy Power Chase, can take this prize with KING OF THE GALES. This nine-year-old has joined Moore's stable since being outclassed in the Gold Cup at Cheltenham last March and being unplaced in the Irish Grand National. Prior to those events, he had shown himself to be a very useful chaser and now looks ready to recapture top form, particularly in the hands of the excellent Francis Woods. Belvederian, who found Cheltenham's fences too formidable last time, will be better suited by today's track. Son Of War is strongly fancied. He is a sound jumper but his preference for heavy ground could just prevent him winning.

Frost prevails

Musselburgh and Southwell were the only meetings yesterday to beat the frost. Leicester and Chepstow had already been called off and yesterday, Kempton's fixture and Wetherby's meeting quickly followed suit. Tomorrow's scheduled meetings at Huntingdon, Newbury and Folkestone succumbed to the weather yesterday.

RESULTS

MUSSELBURGH

12.35: 1. ROSSEL (A Dobbin) 4-9 fav; **2. Honeyschoice** 4-1; **3. Noir Esprit** 25-1. 10 ran. 3, 1½. (P Monteith, Rosewell). Tote: £1.50; £1.10, £1.20, £3.30. Dual Forecast: £2.20. Computer Straight Forecast: £2.63. Trio: £14.30.

1.05: 1. BLUE CHARM (R Garritty) 9-4; **2. Winter Belle** 16-1; **3. Fine Tune** 100-1. 8 ran. 5-6 fav Noyen (fell). 2½, 19. (Mrs S Bradburne, Cupar). Tote: £3.10; £1.50, £1.40, £8.10. DF: £13.20. CSF: £30.55. Trio: £145.30. Non Runners: D'Arblay Street & Highbeath.

1.35: 1. SMOLENSK (M Moloney) 7-4 fav; **2. Chester** 14-1; **3. Little Redwing** 50-1. 10 ran. 11, 4. (J Berry, Cockerham). Tote: £2.30; £1.30, £2.20, £3.30. DF: £32.30. CSF: £24.45. Trio: £41.10. Non Runner: Celtic Comma.

2.05: 1. TRUMP (D Parker) 6-5 fav; **2. D'Arblay Street** 6-1; **3. Hellebedelle** 7-2. 5 ran. 4, 1½. (C Parker, Lockerbie). Tote: £2.00; £1.50, £1.90. DF: £3.10. CSF: £8.08. NR: Dig Deeper.

2.40: 1. HURRICANE ANDREW (N Smith) 4-1; **2. Forward Glen** 16-1; **3. Wayuphill** 6-4 fav. 7 ran. ¾, 1. (J Moore, Darlington). Tote: £5.10; £2.00, £7.10. DF: £62.40. CSF: £50.03. Tricast: £123.02. NR: Judicial Field.

3.15: 1. LORD LAMB (P Niven) 1-4 fav; **2. Nutty Solera** 6-1; **3. Salem Beach** 16-1. 6 ran. 3, 9. (Mrs M Reveley, Saltburn). Tote: £1.30; £1.10, £1.70. DF: £1.60. CSF: £2.68. NR: Cottstown Boy.

Placepot: £124.90. **Quadpot:** £63.30. **Place 6:** £63.16. **Place 5:** £57.02.

SOUTHWELL

12.15: 1. CATS BOTTOM (J Quinn) 6-1; **2. Indiahra** 4-1; **3. In Good Faith** 14-1. 11 ran. 11-4 fav Three Arch Bridge (4th). 2, ½. (A Newcombe, Barnstaple). Tote: £5.90; £2.10, £2.30, £3.90. DF: £15.00. CSF: £28.69. Tricast: £298.19. Trio: £64.50.

12.45: 1. JAY-OWE-TWO (A Culhane) 7-4 fav; **2. Fayrn** 8-1; **3. Magic Fizz** 9-1. 9 ran. 3, 8. (R Whitaker, Wetherby). Tote: £2.20; £1.10, £2.40, £1.70. DF: £13.70. CSF: £16.78. Trio: £18.90.

1.15: 1. KALAR (A Culhane) 13-2; **2. Craigie Boy** 9-2; **3. Bold Aristocrat** 7-2 jt fav. 9 ran. 7-2 jt fav Encore M'Lady. 1½, nk. (D Chapman, York). Tote: £5.30; £2.10, £1.30, £1.70. DF: £16.20. CSF: £34.12. Tricast: £110.51. Trio: £23.90.

1.45: 1. ALBAHA (J Quinn) 5-4 fav; **2. Royal Legend** 7-2; **3. Hornpipe** 10-1. 7 ran. 17, 2½. (J Banks, Newmarket). Tote: £2.20; £1.10, £3.20. DF: £4.20. CSF: £6.15.

2.15: 1. RAINDEER QUEST (J Bramhill) 7-1; **2. Carol Again** 16-1; **3. Risky Tu** 10-1. 13 ran. 7-2 fav Tonka. 12, nk. (J Eyre, Thirsk). Tote: £7.90; £2.10, £3.70, £3.30. DF: £35.50. CSF: £103.48. Tricast: £1,035.88. Trio: £200.40.

2.45: 1. FAST SPIN (A Culhane) 5-2; **2. Chanetown Flyer** 11-2; **3. Phylida** 5-2. 5 ran. 2-1 fav Senate Swings (5th). 5, 3. (T Barron, Thirsk). Tote: £3.70; £2.30, £1.10. DF: £10.60. CSF: £14.69.

3.15: 1. SLIEVENAMON (J Quinn) 5-2 fav; **2. Kingchip Boy** 100-30; **3. Barrel of Hope** 6-1. 11 ran. 5, 2. (J Banks, Newmarket). Tote: £5.30; £2.10, £1.20, £2.30. DF: £12.70. CSF: £12.33. Tricast: £45.74. Trio: £10.50.

Placepot: £332.00. **Quadpot:** £80.90. **Place 6:** £155.87. **Place 5:** £51.66.

LEOPARDSTOWN

12.25: 1. FERN FIELDS (I Browne) 14-1; **2. Canto** 3-1 fav; **3. Lough Slania** 6-1. 15 ran. sht-hd, 3½. Tote: £21.20; £5.80, £1.80, £1.90. Reverse: £45.40. CSF: £88.38. NRs: Grimes, Lady Patrice, Spirit Dancer.

12.55: 1. MILTONFIELD (C O'Dwyer) 3-1 fav; **2. Colleen Leader** 11-1; **3. Casey Jane** 8-1. 15 ran. hd, 7. Tote: £3.70; £2.00, £7.30, £2.60. Reverse: £5.00. CSF: £42.30. Tricast: £253.76.

1.25: 1. MERRY GALE (R Dunwoody) 5-4; **2. Klairon Davis** 4-5 fav; **3. Fiftysevenchannels** 8-1. 5 ran. 8, 13. Tote: £2.30; £1.80, £1.10. Reverse Forecast: £2.00. CSF: £2.92.

2.00: 1. ISTABRAQ (C F Swan) 3-10 fav; **2. Palette** 100-30; **3. Delphi Lodge** 33-1. 5 ran. 5½, 1. Tote: £1.30; £1.10, £1.60. Reverse: £1.60. CSF: £1.93. NR: Uas De Paor.

2.35: 1. NEW CO (C O'Dwyer) 11-4 fav; **2. Wylde Hide** 8-1; **3. Time For A Run** 6-1; **4. Back Bar** 20-1. 17 ran. 1, 7. Tote: £3.90; £1.80, £2.60, £2.20, £4.30. Reverse: £29.80. CSF: £29.10. Tricast: £130.60.

3.10: 1. BUKHARI (C O'Dwyer) 4-1; **2. Boss Doyle** 3-1; **3. Humbel** 8-11 fav. 12 ran. 2, 6. Tote: £7.70; £2.20, £1.30, £1.30. Reverse: £10.80. CSF: £18.33.

3.40: 1. SHANNON GALE (Mr G Elliott) 9-4; **2. Strontium** 2-1 fav; **3. Boro Bow** 7-2. 7 ran. ½, 9. Tote: £4.30; £2.20, £1.80. Reverse: £6.70. CSF: £8.49. After a stewards' inquiry, the placings remained unaltered.

LEOPARDSTOWN

HYPERION

12.35 Eton Gale
1.05 Noble Thyne
1.35 Dorans Pride
2.05 Antapoura
2.40 King Of The Gales
3.15 Rawy
3.45 Bells Bridge

GOING: Yielding.
■ Left-hand course.
■ Course is six miles south of Dublin. ADMISSION: Reserved Enclosure £13; Grandstand £10. CAR PARK: Free.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Metastasio (3.15).

12.35 WILLIAM NEVILLE AND SONS MAIDEN HURDLE £6,000 added 2m 4f Penalty Value £4,110

1	2-13262	ETON GALE (IRE) (Mrs C Hogan) Thomas Foley 7 12 0	T P Treacy
2	4/65157	GLENREEF BOY (IRE) (Mrs E Donoghue) C P Donoghue 7 12 0	D T Evans
3	58331	JODESI (IRE) (P J Dore) W P Mullins 6 12 0	D J Casey
4	633-21	KILCOO BOY (IRE) (Patrick G J Murphy) A P O'Brien 5 12 0	C F Swan
5	60173-9	TEMPLEWOOD EXPRESS (IRE) (Mrs S Doyle) Victor Bowens 7 12 0	B Bowens (3)
6	212431	STORM GEM (IRE) (Town and Country Racing Club) P A Fahy 5 11 9	T J Mitchell
7	354732	TURRAMURRA GIRL (IRE) (Henry Cleary) Henry Cleary 7 11 9	L J Fleming (7)
8	7-	BIT O'SPEED (IRE) (Peter S Thompson) Thomas J Taaffe 5 11 6	C O'Dwyer
9	0089	HEAD CHAPLAIN (IRE) (M D McGrath) J R H Fowler 5 11 6	A Powell
10	6-030	HEAVY HUSTLER (IRE) (Mrs Rita Hale) A L T Moore 5 11 6	F Woods
11	F	ISLE OF IONA (IRE) (Ms Winifred O'Malley) W M Roper 5 11 6	T P Rudd
12	85	NERIK'S PRIDE (IRE) (Miss E Butler) Michael Butler 5 11 6	Mr C A Murphy (7)
13	00	PRINCE WOT A MESS (IRE) (Mrs D J Coleman) Mrs D J Coleman 5 11 6	L P Cusack
14	00/0	PUNTERS DREAM (Cedars Racing Syndicate) Patrick Day 5 11 6	J P Broderick

– 14 declared –

BETTING: 4-5 Eton Gale, 4-1 Kilcoo Boy, 5-1 Jodesi, 8-1 Storm Gem, 10-1 Glenreef Boy, Turramurra Girl, 12-1 Templewood Express, 16-1 others

1995: Meeting abandoned

1.05 O'DWYERS STILLORGAN ORCHARD NOVICE HURDLE £6,000 added 2m 6f Penalty Value £4,110

1	220111	TARTHOOTH (IRE) (Mrs H de Burgh) A L T Moore 5 12 0	F Woods
2	133811	ASK THE BUTLER (IRE) (Barry Lee McCoubrey) C Roche 5 11 11	C O'Dwyer
3	503881	BUGGY (IRE) (P Farrelly) K Farrelly 7 11 8	T J Mitchell
4	P-12113	NOBLE THYNE (IRE) (C Maye) P Mullins 6 11 8	T P Treacy
5	316106	JANE DIGBY (IRE) (New Road Syndicate) A P O'Brien 4 11 4	C F Swan

– 5 declared –

BETTING: 4-6 Noble Thyne, 9-4 Tarthooth, 9-2 Jane Digby, 7-1 Ask The Butler, 25-1 Buggy

FORM GUIDE

TARTHOOTH has won his last three races in convincing style and can continue his winning ways. Last time he beat Flamingo Flower by three lengths over two furlongs farther at Fairyhouse and had previously come home five and a half lengths clear of Radanpour over two furlongs less at Navan. He may be given most to do by Ask The Butler. Christy Roche's gelding was successful in a handicap hurdle over six furlongs less at Navan two weeks ago, beating Bolino Star by a head. He had previously been the easy winner of a maiden hurdle at Fairyhouse over the same trip. Noble Thyne was no match for the smart novice Istabraq at Fairyhouse earlier this month, finishing a well-beaten third. Istabraq was reversing a Punchestown defeat by Noble Thyne, as Paddy Mullins' gelding had won by a head on their previous start and he should go close. Selection: TARTHOOTH

1.35 WILLIAM NEVILLE AND SONS NOVICE CHASE £10,000 added 3m Penalty Value £6,850

1	211-111	DORANS PRIDE (IRE) (T J Doran) Michael Hourigan 7 11 13	J P Broderick
2	42144U	LE GINNO (FR) (Irish World Partners Syndicate) Thomas Foley 9 11 7	T P Treacy
3	DP4F	CAVALLO (FR) (Panther Racing Syndicate) Mrs S A Bramall 6 11 4	Mr J Callen (7)
4	96005P	GARABAGH (IRE) (Robert Sinclair) J H Scott 7 11 4	P McWilliams

– 4 declared –

BETTING: 1-4 Dorans Pride, 7-2 Le Ginno, 12-1 Garabagh, 25-1 Cavallo

FORM GUIDE

DORANS PRIDE should secure his fourth chasing win. He tackles this distance for the first time over fences but should have no problems as he excelled over extended trips in hurdles. Michael Hourigan's gelding put in a game performance to peg back See More Business in the Chiquita Dunmore Novice Chase over half a mile less at Fairyhouse earlier this month and faces nothing of that class here. Le Ginno was six lengths second to Dorans Pride at Limerick when Hourigan's seven-year-old was making his chasing debut. Although 6lb better in, he should not trouble the selection, who has improved since then. Garabagh was pulled up behind Ultra Flutter at Navan two weeks ago when in rear and on that form has to improve to trouble Le Ginno, who was a well-beaten fourth. Cavallo has not shown a lot in novice chases in Britain and should not be a problem. Selection: DORANS PRIDE

2.05 LEOPARDSTOWN CHRISTMAS HURDLE £10,000 added 3m Penalty Value £6,850

1	216215	WHAT A QUESTION (IRE) (Mrs Miles Valentine) M F Morris 8 11 7	C O'Dwyer
2	7331F0	DEE ELL (Mrs A L T Moore) A L T Moore 10 11 2	Mr J D Moore (7)
3	413214	RATHGIBBON (IRE) (Mrs Margaret Marshall) S J Treacy 5 11 2	T P Treacy
4	10112F	RADANPOUR (IRE) (P P T Bridson) W P Mullins 4 10 13	D J Casey
5	133312	ANTAPOURA (IRE) (John Malone) A P O'Brien 4 10 8	C F Swan

– 5 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 What A Question, 13-8 Antapoura, 6-1 Radanpour, 7-1 Rathgibbon, 8-1 Dee Ell

FORM GUIDE

ANTAPOURA is taken to reverse the Newbury placings with What A Question on 12lb better terms. What A Question has since disappointed at Ascot, finishing a well-beaten last of five finishers to Ocean Hawk in the Long Walk Hurdle over a furlong and a half farther but should still go close. Radanpour may prove the main danger to the pair. He was tailed off when falling in the Avonmore Hatton's Grace Hurdle behind Large Action over half a mile less at Fairyhouse earlier this month but had been running well in novice events. Rathgibbon was no match for Rosin The Bow over this trip at Navan a week ago, finishing a well-beaten fourth. He had, however, won a handicap hurdle over half a mile less at Tipperary on his previous start by nine lengths. Dee Ell returns from chasing and may appreciate the run. Selection: ANTAPOURA

2.40 ERICSSON CHASE £50,000 added 3m Penalty Value £32,500 BBC1

1	51211-6	BALLYHIRE LAD (IRE) (Mrs Anna Foss) A P O'Brien 7 12 0	
2	56223U	BELVEDERIAN (A J O'Reilly) M F Morris 9 12 0	C O'Dwyer
3	44422-5	IDIOTS VENTURE (Blackwater Racing Syndicate) A P O'Brien 9 12 0	C F Swan
4	1-15131	JOHNNY SETASIDE (IRE) (John O'Meara) Noel Meade 7 12 0	R Dunwoody
5	527886	KING OF THE GALES (E P King) A L T Moore 9 12 0	F Woods
6	2U6P21	SON OF WAR (Mrs Vera O'Brien) Peter McCreery 9 12 0	U Smyth
7	U04U87	MACALLISTER (IRE) (Mrs M T Quinn) Victor Bowens 6 11 11	B Bowens
8	F13431	OPERA HAT (IRE) (Mrs T K Cooper) J R H Fowler 8 11 9	A Powell

– 8 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Son Of War, 7-2 Johnny Setaside, 4-1 Opera Hat, 5-1 Idiots Venture, 6-1 Belvederian, 8-1 Ballyhire Lad, King Of The Gales, 16-1 Macallister

FORM GUIDE

JOHNNY SETASIDE can follow up his 10-length Fairyhouse victory over Son Of War. Ballyhire Lad finished a well-beaten sixth at Fairyhouse and should not trouble the selection as he is 11lb worse off. Opera Hat may prove the main danger to Noel Meade's gelding. She was a comfortable winner over half a mile less at Naas last time, beating Tryfirion by seven lengths. She had Idiots Venture just over three lengths farther back in fifth and is now 11lb better in. King Of The Gales was 15 lengths farther back in sixth on the same terms. Belvederian unseated his rider early in the TriplePrint Gold Cup at Cheltenham two weeks ago but had previously been nine lengths third to Sound Man over a mile less at Clonmel and should go well. Selection: JOHNNY SETASIDE

3.15 R T E FOR SPORT HANDICAP HURDLE £10,000 added 2m Penalty Value £6,850

1	F4-1U44	MANHATTAN CASTLE (IRE) (P Fitzpatrick) A L T Moore 7 12 0	F Woods
2	13-F736	PUNTING PETE (IRE) (B Doyle) W P Mullins 6 11 11	T P Treacy
3	25-4019	REASILVIA (IRE) (P Senezio) E J O'Grady 6 11 6	R Dunwoody
4	5-84544	ARCTIC WEATHER (IRE) (Richard Bonzo) M J P O'Brien 7 11 5	T P Rudd
5	307353	METASTASIO (IRE) (F Mellon) D G McArdle 4 11 5	H Rogers B
6	1-41002	RAWY (USA) (John P McManus) C Roche 4 11 5	C O'Dwyer
7	30-8461	CLIFDON FOG (IRE) (J P Hill) J S Bolger 5 11 3	C F Swan
8	F42140	OWENDUFF (USA) (F Cruess-Callaghan) A L T Moore 6 10 11	P Carberry
9	164314	FONTAINE LODGE (IRE) (ABC Syndicate) Anthony Mullins 6 10 10	A O'Shea (7)
10	D06214	KAWA-KAWA (R J Collier) P Delaney 9 10 6	G Cotter (3)
11	0-22536	LEGAL AND TENDER (IRE) (J P O'Flaherty) Francis Berry 5 9 7	R P Hogan (7)

– 11 declared –

BETTING: 3-1 Rawy, 9-2 Arctic Weather, 5-1 Metastasio, 6-1 Clifdon Fog, Manhattan Castle, 8-1 Kawa-Kawa, 10-1 Punting Pete, 12-1 others

3.45 P B BUMPER I NH FLAT RACE £12,000 added 2m 4f Penalty Value £8,220

1	25-28S1	AS ROYAL (IRE) (Michael O'Dowd) Thomas Foley 5 12 0	Mr P English (3)
2	1	DAVENPORT BANQUET (IRE) (Mrs M O'Callaghan) W P Mullins 5 12 0	Mr J A Nash
3	P21	OPTIMISM REIGNS (IRE) (John J McLoughlin) John J McLoughlin 5 12 0	Mr P Fenton
4	41	CALLIN SUPREME (IRE) (E Morrissey) P Mullins 5 11 9	Mr A C Coyle (7)
5	481	THE GREY MARE (IRE) (Seamus Fahey) Seamus Fahey 7 11 9	Mr P Fahey (7)
6		BELLS BRIDGE (IRE) (Patrick G J Murphy) A P O'Brien 6 11 7	Mr B M Cash (3)
7	0-	DUSKY LAMP (IRE) (Henry Cleary) Henry Cleary 8 11 7	Mr H F Cleary
8		CHOCOLATE GIRL (IRE) (L O'Connor) James M O'Connor 5 11 2	Mr G Elliott (7)

– 8 declared –

BETTING: 6-4 Davenport Banquet, 3-1 Bells Bridge, 7-2 The Grey Mare, 4-1 As Royal, 5-1 Callin Supreme, 6-1 Optimism Reigns, 10-1 Chocolate Girl, 20-1 Dusky Lamp

WOLVERHAMPTON

HYPERION

12.50 Jigsaw Boy 1.20 Spargo Express 1.50 Gulf Shaadi 2.20 Brecon 2.50 Aljaz 3.20 Cedez Le Passage 3.50 Colosse

GOING: Standard.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High from 6f to 1m 4f.
STALLS: Stalls: 7f & 1m6f – outside; remainder - inside.
■ Fibresand, left-hand, oval course.
■ Course is north of town on A449. Wolverhampton station 1m.
ADMISSION: Club £15; Tattersalls £6 (OAP members of Diamond Club £4). CAR PARK: Free.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Stonecutter (visor, 2.20), Obelos (visor, 3.20) & Young Benson (visor, 3.20).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Hazel (2.20), Aljaz (2.50) & Il Trastevere (3.20) have been sent 156 miles by Miss Gay Kelleway from Whitcombe, Dorset.

12.50 PEREGRINE HANDICAP (CLASS E) (DIV I) £3,700 added 7f

1	200242	DESERT INVADER (14) (C) (D) D Chapman 5 10 0	A Culhane 3
2	24100	FAILED TO HIT (72) N Littmoden 3 9 12	T G McLaughlin 5 V
3	500105	JIGSAW BOY (8) (CD) P Murphy 7 9 8	S Sanders 9 V
4	001141	LEIGH CROFTER (9) (CD) P Cundell 7 9 8	D Holland 4 B
5	141401	MARJORIE ROSE (9) (C) A Bailey 3 9 7	D Wright 2
6	443558	ANONYM (58) (D) (BF) D Nicholls 4 9 6	Alex Greaves 8 B
7	006525	ANITA'S CONTESSA (28) (D) B Palling 4 8 11	Dane O'Neill 6
8	364031	QUINZII MARTIN (9) (CD) D Haydn Jones 8 8 9	S Drowne 10
9	320040	MURRAY'S MAZDA (72) (D) J L Eyre 7 8 1	J Bramhill (7) 1
10	052000	CHALKY DANCER (17) H Collingridge 4 7 10	J Quinn 7 V

– 10 declared –

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Chalky Dancer 6st 11lb.
BETTING: 9-4 Leigh Crofter, 4-1 Desert Invader, 5-1 Quinzii Martin, Marjorie Rose, 6-1 Jigsaw Boy, 8-1 Anonym, 12-1 others

1.20 BUZZARD MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES (CLASS E) £4,200 added 2YO 7f

1	6	ROYAL CASCADE (9) B McMahon 8 10	N Carlisle 6
2		SPARGO EXPRESS B Hills 8 10	J D Smith (3) 5
3	0	WEET A BIT (288) R Hollinshead 8 10	M Wigham 4
4		FRENCH KISS M Channon 8 7	R Perham 1
5	304300	KOMASTA (21) Capt J Wilson 8 7	S Sanders 2
6	355400	DANEHILL PRINCESS (40) R Hollinshead 8 5	J Quinn 3

– 6 declared –

BETTING: 6-4 Spargo Express, 11-4 French Kiss, 5-1 Danehill Princess, 6-1 Royal Cascade, 8-1 Weet A Bit, 12-1 Komasta

1.50 PEREGRINE HANDICAP (CLASS E) (DIV II) £3,700 added 7f

1	100400	SO AMAZING (42) (D) J L Eyre 4 10 0	R Lappin 6
2	000030	MYTTONS MISTAKE (25) (D) A Bailey 3 10 0	G Milligan (7) 1
3	36510	GAD YAKOUN (33) (D) (BF) M Meagher 3 9 9	J Quinn 7
4	002010	ELITE HOPE (8) (CD) N Tinkler 4 9 8	G Carter 4
5	013103	SIS GARDEN (28) (CD) J Cullinan 3 9 4	D Sweeney (5) 3 B
6	000003	GULF SHAADI (8) (CD) E Alston 4 9 1	S Sanders 9
7	200425	SOOTY TERN (15) (BF) J M Bradley 9 8 11	D Holland 2
8	306065	KID ORY (14) (D) D Chapman 5 8 7	A Culhane 5
9	253400	ASTRAL INVADER (107) M Saunders 4 8 6	S Drowne 8

– 9 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Gulf Shaadi, 9-2 Gad Yakoun, 5-1 Elite Hope, 6-1 Sis Garden, 7-1 Sooty Tern, 8-1 Kid Ory, Myttons Mistake, 12-1 others

2.20 EAGLE MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,100 added 1m 100yds

1	504030	HOLDERS HILL (417) M Meagher 4 9 0	J Quinn 5
2	406022	AGENT (47) (BF) J L Eyre 3 8 13	R Lappin 4
3	34563-0	BRECON (15) W Muir 3 8 13	J Weaver 2
4	234-4	RAHEEN (254) (BF) W Turner 3 8 13	D Sweeney (5) 8 B
5		STONECUTTER M Channon 3 8 13	R Perham 11 V
6	00-50	HAZEL (92) Miss Gay Kelleway 4 8 9	Dane O'Neill 1
7	304435	BALINSKY (39) J Berry 3 8 8	P Fessey (5) 7
8	6040-0	BRAES'O'SHIELDHILL (140) A Bailey 3 8 8	W Hollick 6
9	5	CONDITION RED (74) M Saunders 3 8 8	S Drowne 10
10	2	SOUNDS LEGAL (58) P Evans 3 8 8	A Culhane 9
11	404600	SUPREME ILLUSION (AUS) (22) John Berry 3 8 8	N Varley (3) 3 E

– 11 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Raheen, 3-1 Agent, 4-1 Sounds Legal, 9-2 Stonecutter, 12-1 Holders Hill, 14-1 Balinsky, 16-1 others

2.50 FALCON HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,450 added 5f

1	603403	FEATHERSTONE LANE (15) (CD) Miss L Siddall 5 10 0	J Weaver 12 V
2	433140	MADRINA (8) J Berry 3 9 13	C Lowther (7) 1
3	006200	CAPTAIN CARAT (98) (D) D Nicholls 5 9 12	Alex Greaves 9
4	5-14202	MILETRIAN REFURB (204) (D) M Channon 3 9 11	Candy Morris 8
5	05-64	AMINGTON LASS (102) P Evans 3 9 11	S Sanders 2
6	050430	CHEEKY CHAPPY (9) (CD) D Chapman 5 9 10	A Culhane 11 B
7	033000	BENNYHOLME (15) (CD) J Hetherton 5 9 1	N Adams 7 B
8	415002	ALJAZ (28) (CD) Miss Gay Kelleway 6 9 0	Dane O'Neill 5
9	000000	BOFFY (9) (CD) B Baugh 3 8 12	R Perham 3 B
10	000640	AMY LEIGH (8) (D) Capt J Wilson 3 8 11	D Holland 6 B
11	000000	AVANT HUIT (15) Mrs N Macauley 4 7 11	J Quinn 10 B
12	000000	SOTONIAN (HOL) (15) P Felgate 3 7 10	D Wright 4
13	0-00060	ELRAAS (141) R O'Sullivan 4 7 10	F Norton 13 B

– 13 declared –

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Sotonian 7st 7lb, Elraas 7st.
BETTING: 3-1 Captain Carat, 5-1 Madrina, 6-1 Featherstone Lane, Aljaz, 8-1 Amington Lass, 10-1 Miletrian Refurb, Cheeky Chappy, 12-1 others

3.20 MERLIN CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,450 added 1m 1f 79yds

1	505163	CEDEZ LE PASSAGE (2) (CD) K C-Brown 5 9 8	J Weaver 5 B
2	150214	GREENSPAN (21) (C) W Muir 4 9 8	Dane O'Neill 2
3	220325	BENTICO (14) (CD) (BF) Mrs N Macauley 7 9 4	C Teague (3) 10
4	04-0000	IL TRASTEVERE (204) Miss Gay Kelleway 4 9 4	Angela Gallimore (7) 1
5	022365	OBELOS (14) Miss S Wilson 5 9 4	S Whitworth 9 V
6	000000	RAMBO WALTZER (70) (C) D Nicholls 4 9 4	Alex Greaves 13
7	420203	YEOMAN OLIVER (9) (CD) B McMahon 3 9 2	L Newton 3
8	354041	CHADLEIGH LANE (38) (C) R Hollinshead 4 8 12	M Wigham 6
9	000-006	NORTHERN SPRUCE (220) A Foster 4 8 8	R Perham 11
10	011300	YOUNG BENSON (84) (C) T Wall 4 8 8	D Sweeney (5) 4 V
11	460061	HONESTLY (33) (CD) B Smart 3 8 5	S Sanders 7
12	000000	DYANKO (115) M Saunders 3 8 2	A Mackay 8
13	100004	LIA FAIL (9) (C) R Hollinshead 3 8 1	J Quinn 12

– 13 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Rambo Waltzer, 6-1 Bentico, 7-1 Greenspan, Chadleigh Lane, 8-1 Cedez Le Passage, Yeoman Oliver, Honestly, 12-1 others

3.50 OWL HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,200 added 1m 4f

1	010104	SHAHIK (14) (C) D Haydn Jones 6 9 13	S Drowne 7
2	0-44623	MAD MILITANT (14) (CD) (BF) A Streeter 7 9 11	J Quinn 9
3	050006	JOHNS ACT (38) (CD) D Haydn Jones 6 9 6	J Weaver 5 B
4	52261-6	KALAMATA (351) (CD) J Glover 4 9 5	G Carter 1
5	600858	CANARY FALCON (170) R O'Sullivan 5 8 11	D Holland 2 B
6	300454	IN THE MONEY (14) (C) R Hollinshead 7 8 10	M Wigham 10
7	050062	COLOSSE (9) (D) (BF) J L Eyre 4 8 10	R Lappin 6 V
8	103565	MUSTN'T GRUMBLE (21) Miss S Wilson 6 8 10	S Whitworth 11 V
9	023401	RASAYEL (9) (CD) P Evans 6 8 7	A Culhane 8
10	600000	EWAR BOLD (47) K C-Brown 3 8 4	S Sanders 12 B
11	143060	FABULOUS MTOTO (115) M Saunders 6 7 12	A Mackay 4
12	00600-5	PHARLY REEF (273) D Burchell 4 7 11	N Carlisle 3

– 12 declared –

BETTING: 7-2 Rasayel, 9-2 Mad Militant, 5-1 Colosse, 7-1 In The Money, 8-1 Canary Falcon, Shahik, 10-1 Mustn't Grumble, 12-1 others

NEWCASTLE

HYPERION

1.00 Sea Victor 1.30 Court Joker (nb) 2.00 RUSTIC AIR (nap) 2.30 Santa Concerto 3.00 Sparky Gayle 3.30 Mister Ross

INSPECTION: 8.00 AM

GOING: Good to Soft.
■ Left-hand, oval course, with rising run-in; tough, galloping track.
■ Course is on A1, 5m N of town. Metro service to Four Lane Ends station from Newcastle railway station. Bus service from there.
ADMISSION: Club £12; Tattersalls £8; Silver Ring £4 (£2 for OAPs and registered disabled). CAR PARK: Free.

VISORED FIRST TIME: Jemima Puddleduck (1.30).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Sea Victor (1.00) & Star Rage (2.30) have been sent 185 miles by J Harris from Eastwell, Leicestershire.

1.00 NEWCASTLE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 4f

1	246-311	BEGGARS BANQUET (25) (CD) P Beaumont 6 11 12	B Grattan (7)
2	1	SEA VICTOR (14) J L Harris 4 11 5	D Gallagher
3	02120-1	SUTHERLAND MOSS (18) T Tate 5 11 5	J Callaghan
4	0/080/-	BATTERY FIRED (1126) N Mason 7 10 12	S Haworth (7)
5	FP-	CHOPWELL DRAPES (247) J H Johnson 6 10 12	A Dobbin
6	00460-4	DON'T TELL TOM (9) J Wade 6 10 12	A Thornton
7		DROMORE DREAM Mrs J Brown 7 10 12	Mr S Swiers
8		FAYETTE COUNTY J O'Neill 5 10 12	P Carberry
9	0/0-	KINGS HIGH (867) W Kemp 6 10 12	S McDougall
10	0/-2	MALTA MAN (28) P Cheesbrough 6 10 12	A S Smith
11	0/-0	OBVIOUS RISK (26) E Caine 5 10 12	Tristan Davidson (7)
12	3/500-4	PAPPA CHARLIE (25) C Parker 5 10 12	B Storey
13	PP/00/-	PRINCE BALTASAR (851) N Bycroft 7 10 12	G Lee (3)
14	0/-6	PRINCE OF SAINTS (25) M Hammond 5 10 12	R Garritty
15	0	RASIN STANDARDS (14) R Craggs 6 10 12	N Smith
16	86	REVOLT (14) T Easterby 4 10 12	P Niven
17	013-5	SOUTHERN CROSS (25) M W Easterby 4 10 12	M A Fitzgerald
18	4	YEWCROFT BOY (18) M Barnes 5 10 12	S Taylor (5)
19	042-2	CHERRY DEE (28) P Beaumont 5 10 7	R Supple

– 19 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Beggars Banquet, 7-2 Sea Victor, 6-1 Sutherland Moss, 8-1 Malta Man, Cherry Dee, Fayette County, 10-1 Southern Cross, 14-1 Dromore Dream, 20-1 others

1.30 GRAINGER TOWN HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) £2,650 added 2m

1	5135-	EUROLINK THE REBEL (215) (D) S Clark 4 12 0	Miss R Clark (7)
2	11/033/-	GOING PUBLIC (801) (CD) P Cheesbrough 9 11 9	A S Smith
3	4142-U0	JEMIMA PUDDLEDUCK (18) (D) A Streeter 5 11 7	T Eley V
4	652/4P3-	CHILL WIND (247) N Bycroft 7 11 5	M A Fitzgerald
5	44232	FAITHFUL HAND (15) Mrs S Smith 6 11 3	Richard Guest
6	2600-64	INNOCENT GEORGE (22) Miss L Siddall 7 11 2	A Thornton
7	3053-00	GRANDMAN (28) D Moffatt 5 11 2	D J Moffatt
8	44F06-P	GALLARDINI (29) (D) B Rothwell 7 11 0	J Supple
9	12-4541	TRIENNIUM (11) (D) P Monteith 7 11 0 (7ex)	A Dobbin
10	2531/-5	SKIDDAW SAMBA (25) Mrs M Reveley 7 10 12	C McCormack (7)
11	P35P31	COURT JOKER (18) H Alexander 4 10 11	B Storey
12	00504	SEGALA (8) J O'Neill 5 10 11	P Niven
13	5612-06	MARSH'S LAW (50) (D) G Kelly 9 10 10	Mr C Mulhall
14	304P/-60	NOORAN (45) A Whillans 5 10 0	S Taylor (5)
15	555642	AIDE MEMOIRE (12) R Johnson 7 10 0	K Johnson
16	0F40-34	TIOTAO (15) C Parker 6 10 0	D Parker

– 16 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Tiotao 9st 12lb.
BETTING: 6-1 Faithful Hand, 7-1 Triennium, 8-1 Court Joker, Chill Wind, Skiddaw Samba, 10-1 Eurolink The Rebel, Aide Memoire, 12-1 others

2.00 GOSFORTH PARK HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS C) £6,500 added 2m 4f

1	1U16-11	EASBY JOKER (28) (CD) S Kettlewell 8 12 0	P Niven
2	641F-32	TIMBUCKTOO (25) J Gilver 9 11 4	B Storey
3	1134-34	SOLBA (10) (D) C Parker 7 10 9	D Parker
4	13/5U22-	POPESHALL (245) (CD) Mrs S Williamson 9 10 9	A Todd (7)
5	5122-23	ALJADEER (28) (D) (BF) M W Easterby 7 10 9	M A Fitzgerald B
6	23P-340	RUSTIC AIR (28) (D) J FitzGerald 9 10 3	P Carberry
7	03P-202	DEEP DECISION (28) (CD) P Cheesbrough 10 10 0	A S Smith
8	0F-3200	SUPPOSIN (31) (D) Mrs S Smith 8 10 0	Richard Guest

– 8 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Supposin 9st 5lb.
BETTING: 7-4 Easby Joker, 4-1 Rustic Air, 5-1 Aljadeer, Deep Decision, 6-1 Timbucktoo, 10-1 Solba, 12-1 others

2.30 BRANDLING HOUSE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) £5,000 added 2m 4f

1	41-1114	TOM BRODIE (14) (C) (BF) J H Johnson 6 12 0	P Carberry
2	3111P/-5	UNCLE DOUG (25) (C) Mrs M Reveley 5 12 0	P Niven
3	411380-	STAR RAGE (238) (C) J L Harris 6 11 13	D Gallagher
4	121/113-	SANTA CONCERTO (302) L Lungo 7 11 11	R Supple
5	0010-46	PALACEGATE KING (36) (C) A Whillans 7 11 7	S Taylor (5)
6	4-43132	DALLY BOY (7) (C) T Easterby 4 11 0	A S Smith
7	0120F-1	LIVIO (12) (CD) P Monteith 5 10 12 (6ex)	A Dobbin
8	51231-3	PUREVALUE (12) (D) (BF) M W Easterby 5 10 11	M A Fitzgerald
9	03-1211	ELA MATA (21) (D) Mrs A Swinbank 4 10 11	J Supple
10	021-4FF	THURSDAY NIGHT (8) (D) J FitzGerald 5 10 9	A Thornton
11	21P-442	RALITSA (24) M Hammond 4 10 6	R Garritty
12	F110-60	GLENUGIE (12) G Moore 5 10 3	N Bentley
13	20-5315	EXEMPLAR (12) (D) Mrs S Smith 8 10 0	Richard Guest

– 13 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Exemplar 9st 11lb.
BETTING: 4-1 Santa Concerto, 5-1 Livio, 6-1 Ela Mata, 7-1 Tom Brodie, Dally Boy, 8-1 Purevalue, 10-1 Ralitsa, 12-1 others

3.00 NORTHUMBERLAND NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,100 added 2m 110yds

1	3254-11	SPARKY GAYLE (28) (C) (D) C Parker 6 12 0	B Storey
2	603F5R	MONAUGHTY MAN (9) E Caine 10 11 6	Tristan Davidson (7)
3	35PRPP	CARDINAL SINNER (9) J Wade 7 11 2	A Thornton B
4	0-04F43	FENWICK'S BROTHER (10) Mrs S Smith 6 11 2	Richard Guest
5	000R1-2	KILLBALLY BOY (36) J Howard Johnson 6 11 2	P Carberry
6	/11P0/-	MISTER NOVA (1022) M Camacho 7 11 2	P Niven
7	33F-06U	NIJWAY (31) M Barnes 6 11 2	S Taylor (5)
8	6203-03	SINGING SAND (12) P Monteith 6 11 2	A Dobbin

– 8 declared –

BETTING: 2-5 Sparky Gayle, 6-1 Killbally Boy, 7-1 Mister Nova, 12-1 Fenwick's Brother, 16-1 Singing Sand, 20-1 Nijway, 50-1 others

3.30 OLD YEAR NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m

1	15	ADVANCE EAST (14) (D) M Dods 4 11 5	R Supple
2	1	MISTER ROSS (26) (D) J H Johnson 6 11 5	M A Fitzgerald
3	13-2535	SAMANID (7) (D) Miss L Siddall 4 11 5	A Thornton
4	4	BOLLIN FRANK (46) T Easterby 4 10 12	A Dobbin
5		DESERT LORE R McKellar 5 10 12	M Moloney
6	232-523	FASSAN (8) (BF) M Hammond 4 10 12	R Garritty
7	0050-	GREAT GABLE (253) D Moffatt 5 10 12	D J Moffatt
8	0-F0F	JARROW (10) Mrs A Naughton 5 10 12	M Foster
9		MAFTUN G Moore 4 10 12	J Callaghan
10		MEADOW BEE W Reed 4 10 12	T Reed
11	60	MENALDI (26) P Cheesbrough 6 10 12	A S Smith
12		QUANGO J FitzGerald 4 10 12	P Carberry
13	6	TEN PAST SIX (14) Martyn Wane 4 10 12	P Niven
14	0-P	TRIONA'S HOPE (28) E Caine 7 10 12	Tristan Davidson (7)
15	0	UN POCO LOCO (49) Mrs J Brown 4 10 12	E Callaghan (3)
16	PSP5-00	COQUET GOLD (35) F Walton 5 10 7	B Storey

– 16 declared –

BETTING: 11-4 Quango, 7-2 Advance East, 5-1 Mister Ross, 7-1 Bollin Frank, 8-1 Fassan, 14-1 Maftun, Ten Past Six, 16-1 others

Augin enters the final stretch

Sailing
STUART ALEXANDER

Britain's Pete Goss yesterday began the 1,200-mile haul up to Hobart after his rescue of the Frenchman Raphael Dinelli from a sinking yacht in the Vendee Globe singlehanded non-stop round the world race.

As Goss set off, the race leader Christophe Augin was closing on Cape Horn and approaching the last stretch up through the southern Atlantic, across the doldrums and on to the finish at Les Sables d'Olonne.

Augin has a 1,000-mile lead over the Canadian Gerry Roufs in a race which has again taken a heavy toll on equipment and personnel. Goss will be given time compensation both for his 150-mile dash to pick up Dinelli and the diversion to drop him off.

Also on a last stretch is Mike Golding (Group 4), who leads the second leg of the BT Challenge from Rio de Janeiro to Wellington. He should arrive tomorrow with a lead of at least 50 miles over second-placed Andy Hindley (Save the Children) and a considerable increase in his advantage over Simon Walker (Toshiba).

Walker trails by more than 140 miles in third place, having been second by less than three hours on the first leg from Southampton.

Also heading for Tasmania are the Hong Kong yacht Exile and the German maxi Morning Glory, the leaders of the Sydney to Hobart race.

Exile has staged a remarkable recovery in rough seas since restarting the race on Thursday because she jumped the start. The green-hulled yacht, skippered by Australian expatriate Warwick Miller, took the lead yesterday but was expected to be overtaken overnight by the maxi.

Tasmania is also the destination for the favourites of the Melbourne to Hobart race which started yesterday. The Royal Navy's team is skippered by Mickey Broughton.

Winter games' success

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

Leeds plan to restore Boxing Day matches to a permanent place on their calendar after the success of their clash with Halifax this week. A crowd of 13,600 was at Headingley for the game despite the complete lack of public transport in Leeds on the bank holiday.

"The attendance certainly justified our decision to stage the fixture," said Gary Hetherington, the Leeds' chief executive, who, ironically, was one of the arch-advocates of the switch to a summer season.

The future of the Wigan v St Helens fixture on Boxing Day also looks secure after a crowd of more than 16,000 turned up at Central Park.

Swinton will be without their new signing from Wigan, Andy Craig, for the match at Oldham on Sunday.

Craig has knee trouble and Swinton will also have to manage without their half-back Peter Cannon and their former Oldham prop Leo Casey, who are both recovering from surgery.

The game is being played to mark the closure and demolition of the Watersheddings ground, 107 years after the first match, also against Swinton, was played there.

Oldham, who will play their Super League matches at Boundary Park next season, are hoping to give a debut to their new signing Vince Fawcett, who last played with the Australian club Parramatta.

But Fawcett's previous English club, Workington Town, say that he is still registered with them and that they are entitled to a fee.

Pick of the Day

Decisive Moments
Sun 8pm BBC2

The stories behind some of the most memorable media images of the last year are discussed by editors, picture editors and the photographers themselves – one way of remembering 1996 in all its ignominy (Dunblane, TWA flight 800, the Canary Wharf bomb, *right*...) and glory (Take That break up.... Gazza's goal against Scotland...). There's a more traditional review of the year's events on Monday 30 Dec on BBC1.

Film of the Day

Heaven and Earth
Sun 10.10pm BBC2

I'm not a great fan of Oliver Stone's bombastic, in-yer-face style of film-making, and I think his politics – if you want to be kind about it – are just a tad mixed-up. However, Stone *(left)* does breach subjects that Hollywood is largely silent about, and this 1993 offering is, in a way, the third part of his Vietnam trilogy (the other two being *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*). This time, the conflict is seen through the eyes of a Vietnamese peasant woman.

Sunday television and radio

BBC 1

7.00 **Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines** (Ken Annakin 1965 UK). Jolly aviation comedy about a sponsored London to Paris air race. Stuart Whitman, Sarah Miles, James Fox and Terry-Thomas star *(67691894)*. *
9.10 **News** *(3685900)*.
9.15 **The Good Book Guide** (S) *(1109349)*.
9.30 **First Light** *(S) (27417)*.
10.00 **Quo Vadis?** (Mervyn LeRoy 1951 US). Peter Ustinov fiddles as Rome burns, and centurion Robert Taylor falls for Christian woman Deborah Kerr *(67504374)*. *
12.45 **The World's Strongest Man** *(S) (105436)*. *
1.15 **News** *(82701829)*. *
1.25 **Tom and Jerry** *(48988349)*.
1.30 **Just William** *(R) (S) (20504)*. *
2.00 **The Bookworm** *(S) (8405)*. *
2.30 **EastEnders Omnibus** *(S) (3998423)*. *
3.25 **The Wizard of Oz on Ice.** As choreographed by Robin Cousins *(S) (3868639)*.
4.10 **The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends.** Animated *The Tale of Tom Kitten* and *Jemima Puddleduck* *(R) (S) (1272184)*. *
4.35 **EastEnders Omnibus** *(S) (3732469)*. *
5.35 **News and Weather** *(299610)*. *
5.50 **Regional News** *(483523)*.
5.55 **Songs of Praise.** New Year worship from Vienna *(S) (762368)*. *
6.30 **Last of the Summer Wine Christmas Special** *(S) (233691)*. *
7.15 **Antiques Roadshow: The Next Generation.** Special roadshow for youngsters from The Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh *(S) (419184)*.
8.00 **Only Fools and Horses.** Raquel ponders the wisdom of inviting her parents to a dinner party at Nelson Mandela House *(S) (5233)*. *
9.00 **Way Out West Starring Richard Wilson.** *See Preview, p24 (S) (290813)*. *
9.50 **News and Weather** *(574436)*. *
10.05 **The Frank Skinner Show** *(S) (229146)*.
10.45 **The Spirit of 66 with Alf Garnett.** Curious programme in which "Alf Garnett" (Warren Mitchell) presents moments from the World Cup of 1966 with music, comedy and news footage of that year. Any reason? *(971726)*.
11.45 **Alfie** (Lewis Gilbert 1966 UK). Michael Caine sleeps his way through the birds of Swinging London in this influential sex comedy. Millicent Martin, Jane Asher, Denholm Elliott and Shelley Winters co-star *(543894)*.
1.35 **Funeral in Berlin** (Guy Hamilton 1966 UK). Michael Caine again – this time in Harry Palmer mode in the follow-up to the previous year's *The Ipcress File* *(766498)*.
3.15 **Weather** *(41892450)*. *To 3.20am.*

BBC 2

7.30 **Children's BBC:** Joe 90. 7.55 Playdays. 8.15 Bitsa. 8.30 Jackanory Gold. 8.45 Highlander. * 9.10 The Itsy Bitsy Spider. 9.30 Incredible Games. * 10.00 The Mask. * 10.25 Grange Hill. * 10.50 Blue Peter: The Best Bits. * 11.20 Bay City.
11.45 **The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures.** Professor Simon Conway Morris discusses how the study of fossils can provide a fascinating insight into ancient natural history, recording clues as to the speed of the earth's rotation and the movement of prehistoric animals *(S) (892610)*. *
12.45 **The Simpsons** *(S) (9180271)*. *
1.10 **Fantastic Voyage** (Richard Fleischer 1966 US). A top scientist suffers severe brain damage during an assassination attempt, forcing a medical team to be miniaturised to microscopic size and injected inside his body to effect a miracle cure. Not available on the NHS. Starring Raquel Welch and Donald Pleasence *(60390639)*. *
2.45 **Cartoons** *(3990829)*.
3.00 **The Phil Silvers Show.** Bilko reveals his gambling secrets while talking in his sleep *(R) (1823436)*.
3.25 **The Essential Olympics.** New series. Desmond Lynam celebrates 100 years of the modern games, introducing archive footage of the so-called Chariots of Fire Games of 1924 and the infamous 1936 Olympics in Berlin *(S) (8392894)*. *
4.25 **Choir of the Year.** The final *(S) (8568928)*.
5.15 **Rugby Special.** Highlights from Leicester v Harlequins, and a preview of next week's European Cup Final semi-finals *(S) (789287)*.
6.15 **Star Trek: Voyager.** Haakonian grief *(S) (634146)*.
7.00 **American Visions.** Robert Hughes concludes his excellent series with *The Age of Anxiety* – art in the age of Nixon and the Vietnam War *(S) (7455)*. *
8.00 **Decisive Moments: Review of the Year.** Photographers, picture editors and agencies tell the stories behind the year's newsworthy images *(S) (3875)*. * *See Pick of the Day, above.*
9.00 **The Moonstone.** 1/2. *See Preview, p24 (S) (5728225)*.
10.10 **Heaven and Earth** (Oliver Stone 1993 US). Having chronicled the American experience of the Vietnam War, Stone turns his attention to the Vietnamese themselves – following one woman from a peaceful childhood in a peasant village through the traumatic events of the war to her role as the wife of a US serviceman in America. *See Film of the Day, above (S) (24423349)*.
12.25 **Luck, Trust and Ketchup.** Behind-the-scenes on Robert Altman's film *Short Cuts* *(454160)*.
2.05 **Weather** *(5446540)*. *To 2.10am.*

ITV/London

6.00 **GMTV** *(7363097)*. **9.25** The World's Greatest Magic *(5912287)*. **10.15** Link *(3517287)*. * **10.30** Sunday Live *(17338)*. **11.00** Morning Worship *(27504)*. **12.00** Sunday Live *(91558)*. **12.30** It's a Tiny Toon Christmas *(29829)*. **1.00** News *(99103900)*. **1.10** Best of Treasures *(1623981)*.
2.10 **Pete's Dragon** (Don Chaffey 1977 US). Poor Disney live action and animation mix (the dragon is animated) about a lonely orphan and his protective fire-breathing chum. Jim Dale, Mickey Rooney and Helen Reddy star *(61508691)*. *
4.40 **The Making of Moll Flanders.** A report on the preparation and work that went into filming the recent bodice-ripper *(1249097)*.
5.10 **Tales of the Turf.** Final programme in the series about the world of horse racing *(7743165)*.
5.40 **Local News, Weather** *(556417)*. *
5.55 **Sleeping Beauty** (Clyde Geronimi 1959 US). Disney animation about the young princess with the big snooze habit. Expensively made, but not one of Uncle Walt's best *(S) (4054436)*. *
7.20 **News, Weather** *(412455)*. *
7.30 **Coronation Street.** Curly is bemused to find himself the centre of attention as both Anne and Maxine confess their feelings for him. Credibility check, please *(436)*. *
8.00 **The Living Daylights** (John Glen 1987 UK). Timothy Dalton makes his debut as a rather dour, po-faced James Bond, helping the Soviet authorities hunt down a renegade KGB defector who is batting for both sides. The idea was to go back to the series' roots, but that didn't spell great entertainment. Maryam d'Abo, Joe Don Baker and Art Malik "lend" support *(S) (50017691)*. *
10.25 **Hale and Pace Down Under.** Naughty fellas Gareth Hale and Norman Pace return from Australia with some new characters and sketches *(S) (863504)*. *
11.25 **News, Weather** *(201610)*. *
11.39 **LWT Weather** *(617542)*.
11.40 **The Beatles Anthology.** The moptops stop touring, retreat into the studio and return with the *Sergeant Pepper* album *(R) (S) (285368)*. *
1.40 **Mahler** (Ken Russell 1974 UK). Typically daft, overblown Ken Russell biography – restrained only by the low budget. Robert Powell plays the Austrian composer, while Georgina Hale is his stifled wife, Alma *(81363837)*.
3.45 **Cool Vibes** *(R) (56465030)*.
4.05 **The New Adventures of Pippi Longstocking** (Ken Annakin 1988) Tami Erin stars as the mischievous young girl with an amazing array of supernatural powers *(S) (47929301)*.
5.55 **News** *(4793214)*. *To 6.00am.*

Channel 4

6.15 **Blitz!** *(R) (S) (4608184)*.
7.10 **The Hill Billie Goats** *(R) (7961146)*.
7.35 **Biker Mice from Mars** *(1676523)*.
8.00 **Hang Time** *(S) (7854542)*.
8.25 **The Adventures of Hyperman** *(7937829)*.
8.55 **Insektors** *(S) (9976271)*.
9.15 **Saved by the Bell** *(R) (928829)*. *
9.45 **California Dreams** *(847900)*.
10.15 **Happy Days** *(R) (8493320)*.
10.40 **Hollyoaks Omnibus** *(S) (6268542)*. *
11.40 **The Waltons** *(R) (3824097)*. *
12.40 **God in the House.** Raving Christians *(9183368)*.
1.05 **Snow Business** *(5473233)*.
2.10 **Silent Love.** German short *(64667436)*.
2.30 **The Robe** (Henry Koster 1953 US). Roman centurion Richard Burton annoys Caligula by converting to the new-fangled Christian faith. Jean Simmons is the reason why *(61355542)*. *
5.05 **Brookside Omnibus** *(S) (4694436)*. *
6.30 **Two Fat Rorys.** Rory Bremner celebrates his 50th show for Channel 4 with his two "characters", weatherman Ian McCaskill and Des Lynam *(894)*.
7.00 **Women at Play: A Lady's Guide to Casinos.** *See Preview, p24 (S) (7981)*. *
7.30 **Just Dancing Around?** Mark James profiles choreographer Trisha Brown, heroine of the Sixties avant-garde scene. *See Preview, p24 (S) (62707)*. *
8.30 **Ride the High Country** (Sam Peckinpah 1962 US). Sam Peckinpah's second film is a beautifully photographed western starring Randolph Scott as a lawman-turned-circus sharpshooter who agrees to help transport gold bullion to a bank, but plans to steal it en route. Joel McCrea co-stars *(76573962)*. *
10.15 **The Ballad of Little Jo** (Maggie Greenwald 1993 US). Interesting and unusual film starring Suzy Amis as an 1860s New York socialite thrown out of her father's house after bearing an illegitimate child and being forced to start a new life in the Wild West – as a man *(24417788)*. *
12.30 **The Oklahoma Kid** (Lloyd Bacon 1939 US). James Cagney makes an unlikely cowboy as he sets out to avenge himself on Humphrey Bogart for his father's death *(38943)*.
2.00 **The Public Enemy** (William A Wellman 1931 US). Classic gangster thriller lives up to its reputation. You can see why it put James Cagney on the map as the bootlegger on his way to the top, by way of smashing a grapefruit in Mae Clarke's face. Edward Woods, Jean Harlow and Joan Blondell co-star *(26382)*.
3.30 **The Ricordi Saga.** 4/4. Last in the series about the Ricordi family. Verdi is dead and Puccini is trying to finish *Turandot* *(78721)*. *To 5.00am.*

ITV/Regions

ANGLIA
As London except: **12.30pm** James Bond Jnr *(29829)*. **1.10** The Making of Star Trek: First Contact *(30719610)*. **1.40** Kick-Off Live! *(93597436)*. **4.15** Goldeneye: The Secret Files *(6470097)*. **4.45** Bugs Bunny Overtures to Disaster *(606900)*. **1.40am** Instant Replay 1996 *(2737540)*. **2.40am** Bushell on the Box *(5541194)*. **3.10am** Funny Business *(82103382)*. **3.40am** Films: Wizards of the Lost Kingdom *(3916818)*. **5.00-5.30am** Not Fade Away *(99382)*.

CHANNEL 3 NORTH EAST/YORKSHIRE
As London except: **12.30pm** Channel 3 North East: World of Wonder *(91895412)*. Yorks: Goals on Sunday *(91895412)*. **1.10** Coronation Street *(30719610)*. **1.40** It's a Tiny Toon Christmas *(21742639)*. **2.05** Masters of Illusion *(98148751)*. **2.55** Film: Pete's Dragon *(29425078)*. **5.25** Cartoon Time *(56964171)*. **1.40am** Film: Ghayal *(84013295)*. **4.35-5.55am** Film: Race for Your Life, Charlie Brown *(9692769)*.

CENTRAL
As London except: **12.30pm** Central Newsweek *(91895412)*. **1.10** Masters of Illusion *(91517388)*. **2.00** The Central Match – Live! *(86947894)*. **4.15-5.50pm** Film: The Sleepers *(47829441)*.

HTV
As London except: **12.25pm** West: It's a Tiny Toon Christmas *(81837861)*. Wales: Petersen *(81837861)*. **1.40** Wales: Films: Pete's Dragon *(48107456)*. **2.00** West: The West Match – Live! *(61528455)*. **3.55** Wales: Masters of Illusion *(91690971)*. **4.25** West: World of Wonder *(64605581)*. **4.50** Wales: Tellyphonin' *(24839771)*. **4.55** West: Masters of Illusion *(91175231)*. **1.40am** Instant Replay 1996 *(2737540)*. **2.40am** Bushell on the Box *(5541194)*. **3.10am** Funny Business *(82103382)*. **3.40am** Films: Wizards of the Lost Kingdom *(3916818)*. **5.00-5.30am** Not Fade Away *(99382)*.

MERIDIAN
As London except: **12.30pm** Cartoon Time *(37305041)*. **1.10** Film: Freeze Frame *(99422711)*. **2.40** Cartoon Time *(15288941)*. **2.45** Film: Pete's Dragon *(61345165)*. **5.20** Grass Roots Compilations *(89330971)*. **1.40am** Instant Replay 1996 *(2737540)*. **2.40am** Bushell on the Box *(5541194)*. **3.10am** Funny Business *(82103382)*. **3.40am** Film: Wizards of the Lost Kingdom *(3916818)*. **5.00-5.30am** Not Fade Away *(99382)*.

WESTCOUNTRY
As London except: **12.30pm** Westcountry Update *(91895412)*. **1.10** Pongo's Tail: The Making of 101 Dalmatians *(30719610)*. **1.40** Masters of Illusion *(46734171)*. **2.30** Goldeneye: The Secret Files *(75097)*. **3.30** Film: Pete's Dragon *(505097)*. **1.40am** Instant Replay 1996 *(2737540)*. **2.40am** Bushell on the Box *(5541194)*. **3.10am** Funny Business *(82103382)*. **3.40am** Film: Wizards of the Lost Kingdom *(3916818)*. **5.00-5.30am** Not Fade Away *(99382)*.

S4C
As C4 except: **12.40pm** Rownd a Rownd *(95325421)*. **1.30** Slot Meithrin *(46542)*. **2.00** Arolwg y Flwyddyn *(13813)*. **3.00** Coping with Christmas *(5900)*. **3.30** Party of Five *(91485041)*. **4.25** Brookside *(71365231)*. **5.50** News *(490813)*. **6.00** Arthur Fawr Wow a Marlyn *(23829)*. **7.30** Pobol y Cwm *(338)*. **7.30** Dechrau Canu, Dechrau Canmol *(338)*. **8.00** Twrio *(5742711)*. **8.55** Y Paimant Aur *(71496 2)*. **9.55** News *(724504)*. **10.05** Film: Shopping *(21461 0)*. **11.45-1.30am** Film: The World's Oldest Living Bridesmaid *(658356)*.

Radio Choice

Secret Bedrooms (7pm R1) comes with a warning that some may find it distasteful; though frankly, this catalogue of the things that go on in teenage bedrooms (sex, smoking, oversleeping, untidiness) is rather less frank and fearless than most poems by the Earl of Rochester, hero of Stephen Jeffreys' play, **The Libertine** (7.30pm R3) and played by Bill Nighy *(left)*.

Radio 1
(97.6-99.8MHz FM)
7.00am Kevin Greening **10.00** Dave Pearce **2.00** Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation **4.00** UK Top 40 **7.00** Secret Bedrooms. *See Choice, above.* **8.00** John Peel: Festive 50 Part 4 **10.00** Best Albums of 1996 **12.00** Andy Kershaw **4.00-7.00am** Charlie Jordan

Radio 2
(88-90.2MHz FM)
7.00am Don Maclean **9.05** Steve Wright's Sunday Love Songs **11.00** The Best of Parkinson's Sunday Supplement **1.00** Desmond Carrington **3.00** Benny Green **4.00** A Year to Remember **4.30** Sing Something Simple **5.00** Pam Ayres **7.00** Hugh Scully **8.30** Sunday Half Hour **9.00** Alan Keith **10.00** The David Jacobs Collection **11.00** The Arts Programme **12.05** Adrian Finighan **3.00-7.00am** Steve Madden

Radio 3
(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.55am News Headlines; Weather. **7.00** Sacred and Profane. **8.50** Choice of Three. **9.00** Brian Kay in Vienna. **12.15** Robert Woolley. Froberger: Toccata No 4 in F; Suite No 1 in A minor; Suite No 18 in G minor. Bach: Partita No 3 in A minor, BWV827. **1.00** The Liquid Companion. Andrew Jefford braves the horizontal rain of Islay to discover the secrets behind one of the most flavoursome whiskies produced north of the border. **1.20** Ulster Orchestra. Nielsen: Overture: Helios. Glinka: Valse-Fantaisie. Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No 2. Nielsen: Symphony No 2. **2.45** Spirit of the Age. George Pratt reports from the Armenian monastery on the island of San Lazzaro in the Venetian lagoon, one of the few places in the world still practising the ancient tradition of Armenian chant. **3.45** Thomas Hampson at the Wigmore. The American baritone Thomas Hampson in a recital given earlier this month at the Wigmore Hall, London, to mark the centenary of composer Carl Loewe. Loewe: Gruss am Meer; Die Uberfahrt; Das Fischermadchen; Uber allen Gipfeln; Der du Von der Himmel; Ich Denke Dein. Schubert: An die Leier; Memnon; Der Zurnenden Diana; Die Gotter Griechenlands. Schumann: Lieder und Gesange aus dem Lyrischen Intermezzo. **5.45** The Sunday Feature: Walter Legge. Walter Legge, the founder of the Philharmonia, was one of the last great impresarios, whose formidable authority helped shape postwar music. Natalie Wheen explores the man with contemporaries, colleagues and his widow. **6.30** Chopin by Arrangement. Rearrangements of music by Chopin, presented by Jeremy Nicholas. Chopin, orch Balakirev: Piano Concerto No 1 in E minor. **7.30** The Sunday Play: *The Libertine*. Set in the London of 1675, Stephen Jeffreys' drama centres on the louche figure of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. A poet, wit and Restoration hero, he was regularly banished from the court of Charles II for excesses of every kind. *See Choice, left.* **9.10** Choir Works. Francois Couperin: Messe Solonnelle a l'Usage des Paroisses. The season of music for the Mass continues with a performance from the Chapel Royal in the Palace of Versailles. **11.15** Closer to the Gods. Janet Topp-Fargion explores the African music of possession and trance, including the Giriama spirit dance from eastern Kenya, Sufi ceremonies from northern Morocco, and the calling-down of the spirits in the Bleketa cult among the Anlo people of Ghana. (1/2). **11.45** Record Review. **1.00** Through the Night. **5.30-6.30am** Sequence.

Radio 4
(92.4-94.6MHz FM, 198kHz LW)
6.00am News. **6.10** Something Understood. **7.00** News. **7.10** Sunday Papers. **7.15** On Your Farm. **7.40** Sunday. **8.50** The Week's Good Cause. **9.00** News. **9.10** Sunday Papers. **9.15** Letter from America. **9.30** Morning Service. **10.15** The Archers. Omnibus edition. **11.15 (LW)** Test Match Special. Commentary on the fourth day of the Second Test, with Peter Baxter, Henry Blofeld and Simon Mann. **11.15 (FM)** Proud Walker. Drama telling the story of the man who single-handedly relaid the foundations of Winchester Cathedral. **11.45 (FM)** Foreign Correspondence. Red Harrison describes life in Sydney as a foreign correspondent. **12.15 (FM)** Desert Island Discs. With author Martin Amis. **12.55** Weather. **1.00** The World This Weekend. **1.10 (LW)** Test Match Special. **1.55** Shipping Forecast. **2.00 (LW)** Test Match Special. **2.00 (FM)** Gardeners' Question Time. **2.30** Classic Serial: *Alice in Wonderland*. By Lewis Carroll. Alice finds her way into a magical garden. (2/2). **3.30** Pick of the Year. **4.15** Tales from the Organ Loft. Jeremy Summerly presents an in-depth insight into the world of the church organist. **5.00** Something to Write Home About. Comedy duo Sean Foley and Hamish McColl take their vaudeville show Stop Calling Me Vernon to India, stopping to sample the delights of Bollywood along the way. **5.30** Poetry Please! **5.50** Shipping Forecast. **5.55** Weather. **6.00** Six O'Clock News. **6.15** United States of Anger. Gavin Esler examines why so many Americans are apathetic about politics. **6.30** Whispering Among the Leaves. Evocative recordings of woodland sounds, from rustling leaves to resonant tree trunks. **7.00** A Good Read. Sarah Dunant invites satirists John Bird and John Fortune to discuss their three favourite paperbacks. **8.00** Gardening Under the Raj. Sue Phillips examines how British horticulturalists attempted to transform the Indian landscape. **8.30** Making History. Christopher Andrew continues his intimate look at the work of historians. **9.00** Glory Days. **9.30** Strictly TT. An appreciative profile of Terry-Thomas by Michael Pointon. **10.00** News. **10.15** Medicine Now. **10.45** Breakaway. **11.15** Ode to Hilversum. An look at how the medium of radio complements and inspires poetry. With contributions from Brendan Kennelly, Gillian Clarke, Robert Crawford, Kathleen Jamie and Ken Smith. **11.45** Seeds of Faith. Mike Ford embarks on a pilgrimage to Ephesus in western Turkey, meeting pilgrims from across the world as they travel in the footsteps of St Paul. **12.00** News. **12.20** Bells on Sunday. From Orleans, Massachusetts. **12.30** The Late Story: *Rumpole and the Widow Twankey*. By John Mortimer. **12.48** Shipping Forecast. **1.00-6.00am** As World Service.

Radio 5
(693, 909kHz MW)
6.05am Hold the Front Page Christmas Special **6.30** Breakfast **9.05** Sunday with Mair **11.35** Frostbite and Footholds **12.05** The Big Byte **12.35** Crime Desk **1.05** Gary Lineker's Sunday Sport **6.05** Sportscall **7.00** News Extra **7.35** You Cannot Be Serious **8.35** The Irish in Britain **9.00** Dallyn Worldwide **10.05** Acid Test **10.35** Out This Week **11.00** Night Extra **11.35** SportsAmerica **12.05** Night Moves **2.05** Up All Night **5.05-6.00am** Entertainment '96

Classic FM
(100.9-101.9MHz FM)
6.00am Sarah Lucas **9.00** New Year Classic Romance **12.00** Celebrity Choice **1.00** Alan Mann's Packed Lunch **3.00** Adiemus: Songs of Sanctuary **4.00** Best of Classic Discoveries 1996 **6.00** A Question of Classics **7.00** Countdown Top 10 of 1996 **8.00** World Opera **10.30** Howard's Week **12.00** Andre Leon **4.00-6.00am** Mark Griffiths.

Virgin Radio
(1215, 1197-1260kHz MW 105.8MHz FM)
6.00am Janey Lee Grace **10.00** Graham Dene **2.00** Bobby Hain **6.00** Lynn Parsons **10.00** Gary Davies **2.00-6.00am** Howard Pearce

World Service
(198kHz LW)
1.00am Newsdesk **1.30** Short Story **1.45** On the Move **2.00** Newsday **2.30** Anything Goes **3.00** News **3.15** Sports Roundup **3.30** Heritage **4.00** Newsdesk **4.30** Off the Shelf: Web Central **4.45** Country Style **5.00** Newsday **5.30-6.00am** Composer of the Month

Satellite and Cable

SKY 1
6.00am Hour of Power *(48610)*. **7.00** My Little Pony *(8635875)*. **7.25** Dynamo Duck *(6918900)*. **7.30** Dolly and His Friends *(69504)*. **8.00** Orson and Olivia *(36691)*. **8.30** Free Willy *(35962)*. **9.00** The Best of Geraldo *(71436)*. **10.00** Young Indiana Jones Chronicles *(65788)*. **11.00** Parker Lewis Can't Lose *(97726)*. **11.30** Real TV *(98455)*. **12.00** WWF: Superstars *(86184)*. **1.00** Star Trek *(62504)*. **2.00** Mysterious Island *(33691)*. **3.00** The New Adventures of Superman *(92271)*. **4.00** Kung Fu *(88078)*. **5.00** Great Escapes *(7523)*. **5.30** Muppets Tonight! *(3436)*. **6.00** The Simpsons *(4879)*. **6.30** The Simpsons *(7829)*. **7.00** Beverly Hills 90210 *(23639)*. **8.00** The New Adventures of Superman *(36977)*. **9.00** The X Files Reopened *(12523)*. **10.00** Millenium *(15610)*. **11.00** Manhunter *(66417)*. **12.00** 60 Minutes *(31382)*. **1.00** Civil Wars *(67382)*. **2.00-6.00am** Hit Mix Long Play *(95653)*.

SKY 2
7.00pm Xena: Warrior Princess *(18227261)*. **8.00** Melrose Place *(18029621)*. **10.00** Poltergeist: The Legacy *(18210971)*. **11.00** Seinfeld *(21392871)*. **11.30** Who Do You Do? *(59823491)*. **12.00** Films: Movers and Shakers (1985) *(26485661)*. **2.00-6.00am** Hit Mix Long Play *(86450301)*.

SKY MOVIES
6.00am Dreamer (1979) *(37252)*. **8.00** The Neptune Factor (1973) *(57271)*. **10.00** Freefall: Flight 174 (1993) *(49468726)*. **11.55** Octopussy (1983) *(64031748)*. **2.05** Other Women's Children (1993) *(96914 6)*. **4.00** Thunderball (1965) *(29068558)*. **6.10** Goldfinger (1964). James Bond faces one of his most dangerous assignments when he tangles with ruthless bullion smuggler Goldfinger and his deadly mute sidekick Oddjob. Tongue-in-cheek adventure, with Sean Connery, Gert Frobe and Honor Blackman *(94529788)*. **8.00** Hercules and the Amazon Women (1994). The mighty mythical hero sets out with his friend to rescue the residents of a small village from a gang of Amazonian women. Adventure, starring Kevin Sorbo, Anthony Quinn and Michael Hurst *(21271)*. **10.00** Judge Dredd (1995). Sci-fi thriller starring Sylvester Stallone, Armand Assante, Max von Sydow and Diane Lane *(853523)*. **11.40** The Movie Show *(644436)*. **12.10** Romeo is Bleeding (1993) *(187011)*. **1.55** Love in the Strangest Way (1993) *(850276)*. **3.40-5.10am** New Eden (1994) *(86212363)*.

MOVIE CHANNEL
6.00am Tintin: The Seven Crystal Balls and Prisoners of the Sun (1987) *(44024 17)*. **7.20** The Care Bears Movie II: A New Generation (1986) *(1125900)*. **8.40** Sherlock: Undercover Dog (1994) *(1850558)*. **9.55** The Man with the Golden Gun (1974) *(85496639)*. **12.00** Johnny's Girl (1995) *(45436)*. **2.00** The Spy Who Loved Me (1977) *(35784)*. **4.00** Rookie of the Year (1993) *(9504)*. **6.00** As Good as Dead (1995). Two women swap identities to allow one to use the other's medical insurance – but when events take a tragic turn, the remaining friend begins to realise there may be more to the situation than meets the eye. Thriller starring Traci Lords, Judge Reinhold and Crystal Bernard *(24368)*. **8.00** Circle of Friends (1995). A naive young woman leaves her small village home to attend university in 1950s Dublin, where her eyes are opened to city life by an old friend. Heart-warming romantic drama starring Chris O'Donnell, Minnie Driver and Colin Firth *(29813)*. **10.00** Le Colonel Chabert (1994). An officer returns home from the Napoleonic wars after being reported missing in action – only to find his wife using his fortune to advance the career of her second husband. French drama, starring Girard Depardieu, Fanny Ardant and Claude Rich *(147829)*. **11.55** There Goes My Baby (1994). Comedy drama set in 1966, following a group of soon-to-graduate college students as they prepare for life in the big, bad world. Starring Dermot Mulroney, Rick Schroder, Kelli Williams and Noah Wyle *(979320)*. **1.35** Hollywood Madam (1994) *(1930566)*. **3.05** A Dangerous Affair (1994) *(284450)*. **4.40-5.55am** Sherlock: Undercover Dog (1994) *(44053295)*.

SKY MOVIES GOLD
11.00am The Yearling (1946) *(91281233)*. **1.10** The Great Santini (1979) *(93471875)*. **3.05** The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956) *(58527146)*. **5.05** Patton (1970) *(61143542)*. **8.00** Cousins (1989). Ted Danson and Isabella Rossellini play cousins struggling against their own powerful mutual attraction while their respective spouses are having an affair. Sean Young, Lloyd Bridges and William Petersen co-star in this remake of the French romantic drama *(3563368)*. **10.00** Nico (1988). Steven Seagal stars as a tough cop with martial arts skills who uncovers a conspiracy involving the CIA, a drugs ring and government corruption. With Pam Grier and Sharon Stone *(9944558)*. **11.45** Betrayed (1988). Thriller starring Debra Winger, Tom Berenger and Betsy Blair *(38741691)*. **1.55** Julia (1977) *(3502943)*. **3.50** A Day's Pleasure (1919) *(86737092)*. **4.15-5.50am** Golden Earrings (1947) *(7827905)*.

UK GOLD
7.00am Record Breakers *(1567078)*. **7.30** Blue Peter *(1579813)*. **8.00** Animal Magic *(4225165)*. **8.30** Jackanory *(2013707)*. **8.45** Chigley *(2001962)*. **9.00** Survivors *(9580813)*. **10.00** Dr Who *(3082417)*. **1.20** Film: Carry on Girls (1973) *(68122146)*. **3.00** The Bill Omnibus *(61298287)*. **5.20** Going Straight *(2902875)*. **6.00** Bullseye *(8720455)*. **6.30** What a Carry On! *(8711707)*. **7.00** Dick Emery *(7473610)*. **7.30** After the Show *(8700691)*. **8.00** Film: Madame Sousatzka (1988) *(55340349)*. **10.15** Boys from the Blackstuff *(91910287)*. **11.25** Spitting Image *(5800691)*. **12.00** Carrott Confidential *(2434585)*. **12.40** Film: Find the Lady (1976) *(34655382)*. **2.05-7.00am** Shopping at Night *(15796276)*.

SKY SPORTS 1
7.00am World Sport Special *(26813)*. **7.30** Cricket: Zimbabwe Vs England – Second Test – Live *(2631981)*. **3.00** Football: Southampton Vs Liverpool – Live *(6175078)*. **6.30** Basketball: Manchester Giants Vs Derby Storm *(595829)*. **9.00** Cricket *(256813)*. **11.30** Football Special *(244078)*. **2.00-4.30am** Basketball *(958092)*.

SKY SPORTS 2
7.00am Soccer Extra *(2308436)*. **11.00** Goals on Sunday *(2458726)*. **12.00** American Football: Wildcard Play Off *(7740356)*. **3.30** Ice Hockey *(7367726)*. **5.30** Trans World Sport *(9173349)*. **6.30** Football League Review *(9922165)*. **7.30** Angling Masters *(2608875)*. **8.30** Football Special *(6092707)*. **11.00** Olympics: Sprinters *(2439691)*. **12.00-1.00am** Cricket: Sporting Classics – West Indies Vs England 1994 *(6812740)*.

SKY SPORTS 3
12.00noon Football League Review *(43161233)*. **1.00** Darts: WDC World Championship – Live *(42877184)*. **5.00** World Sport Special *(41638368)*. **5.30** Drag Racing *(83311504)*. **6.00** Watersports *(43167417)*. **7.00** Darts: WDC World Championship - Live *(40157233)*. **11.30-12.00midnight** World Sport Special *(94866417)*.

EUROSPORT
7.30am Eurofun *(22748)*. **8.00** Alpine Skiing *(39813)*. **8.30** Alpine Skiing *(74320)*. **9.30** Offroad *(99097)*. **10.30** Alpine Skiing *(6394829)*. **11.45** Alpine Skiing *(4159504)*. **1.00** Tennis *(91639)*. **3.00** Alpine Skiing *(30455)*. **4.00** Ski-Jumping *(79558)*. **5.30** All Sports *(76252)*. **6.30** Olympic Games *(5813)*. **7.00** Figure Skating *(72207)*. **9.00** All Sports *(15146)*. **9.30** Olympic Games *(57707)*. **10.00** Formula One *(46504)*. **11.00-12.30am** Ski-Jumping *(85436)*.

LIVE TV
6.00am Revelations **6.30** Looking for Love **7.00** Spanish Archer **7.30** Mind and Body **8.00** Why Files **8.30** Video Box **9.00** Psychic Pets **9.30** Fashion **10.00** Revelations **10.30** Looking for Love **11.00** Campus Capers **11.30** Spanish Archer **12.00** Revelations **12.30** Why Files **1.00** Looking for Love **1.30** Psychic Pets **2.00** Fashion **2.30** Mind and Body **3.00** Canary Wharf Omnibus **4.30** Campus Capers **5.00** Revelations **5.30** Looking for Love **6.00** Fashion **6.30** Sunday Sport Live **7.00** Spanish Archer **7.30** Revelations **8.00** Psychic Pets **8.30** Why Files **9.00** Seventies Pop Show **9.30** Looking for Love **10.03** Sunday Sport Live **10.30** Stand-Up Live Special: Jim Bowen Presents Oh Codl **11.30** Edenquest with Sandra Taylor **12.30** Kiss TV: Kiss Lifestyle **1.30** Home Shopping **2.00** Stand-Up Live Special: Mike Reid **3.00** Edenquest with Pamela Anderson **3.30-6.00am** Night-Time Programmes

Turf Moor's pies were described as 'tremendous'. The award must have been a tonic to fans who have had little to cheer recently

Olivia Blair

ON SATURDAY

Apologies to all turkeys, who have no choice in the matter, but the aim of every team over the Christmas and New Year period, when up to 12 points are at stake, is to avoid getting stuffed. Ironically, most fans will *do completely* the opposite and stuff themselves on turkey and all the trimmings. You would think catering takings at grounds at this time of year must show an unhealthy deficit with fans suffering from the effects of over-indulgence.

Being a veggie, I tend to miss out at Christmas and football grounds. Not that I'm bothered about the latter; I've often questioned the wisdom of spending the 15 minutes of half-time queueing for a soggy meat pie and a cup of tea only to *find that by the time you've got back* to your seat they're lukewarm – and you're 1-0 down. That's happened to me twice. I'm ashamed to admit I was once so cold at Dens Park that I was pre-occupied not by the action but by the thought of my half-time toddy (even if it was only PG Tips). Unfortunately I hadn't reckoned on 12,000 likeminded fans – Rangers had scored twice against Dundee by the time I reclaimed my seat.

Then, several seasons ago at Fratton Park, Portsmouth and West Ham served up such a dull first half that I headed for refreshments a minute before the half was up, only to hear a familiar roar which certainly was not applause for a rousing first 45.

Burnley fans, however, have more reason than most to head off early *for their half-time pie. It's not of*ten the Nationwide League sweeps the honours board when the fat cats of the Premiership are in the running, but, according to a recent survey, when it comes to pies the East Lancastrian club really takes the biscuit.

Turf Moor's pies were described as "tremendous, featuring lightly spiced potatoes blended with lean chunks of meat in a rich gravy, and perfect pastry – slightly soggy yet succulent casing to absorb the juice and a light and firm crust". The award must have been a tonic to fans who have had precious little to cheer in recent years.

Rochdale scooped a double honour: coming fourth and also receiving a special commendation for pastry of which Delia Smith, Britain's *favourite cook and Norwich's most* well-known director, would be proud. But I was surprised to find that the famous Forfar Bridie was conspicuous by its absence. In fact, Scottish culinary delights (which *might seem a contradiction in terms)* hardly got a look-in, perhaps because pakoras rather than pies are an Ibrox favourite, while that Scottish speciality, the deep-fried pizza, goes down a treat at Easter Road.

However, Scotland still has some champion pies, of which the Bridie is one: a tasty, flat mince (that's mutton, before you groan) pie made with flaky pastry. The Hearts chairman Chris Robinson may be known as the Pie Man because he owns the Wheatsheaf catering company, but in reality the Forfar fare is only matched by the pies on offer at Kilmarnock. The "Killie Special" is in fact so special that the Proclaimers were so enamoured of the succulent pies they consumed at Rugby Park while watching Hibs play they decided to immortalise them in a track entitled, unsurprisingly, *The Killie Pie.*

On a more weighty matter, it does seem as if our football clubs have decided it's more than just fans' football tastebuds which need titillating. Preston have entered their Great Room restaurant facilities in the new Tom Finney stand into the Booker Prize for Standard Of Food Excellence, while Newcastle and Manchester United have raised standards in the kitchen as well as on the pitch.

The grub on offer at St James' Park's Magpie Room Restaurant has been described as "dishier than David Ginola". To whet the appetite: spicy chicken sausages with Calvados sauce and seared scallops with butter beans and lentils. "We're showing what can be done in a football club and I hope this will be the start of even better things." No, not Kevin Keegan, but executive chef John Blackmore, former *chef de partie* at the Park Lane Intercontinental, who has had as much of an influence on the palate at Newcastle as Keegan has on the pitch. St James' is the first football stadium to be listed in the Good Food Guide.

Over at Old Trafford the Red Café is the latest attraction: a 200-seater themed restaurant inside the North Stand where the menu reflects United's increasingly continental-look line-up: deep-fried pearls of mozzarella with gooseberry and nectarine compote; scampi calypso; and monkfish tails in a black bean sauce.

Of course, considering a three-course meal for a family of four at the Café will cost an average of £47, and that a ticket is upwards of £12 a head on top, it's no wonder the good old pie remains the more attractive proposition.

United look rested and in threatening form

Football

GUY HODGSON

Boxing Day was originally an occasion for giving and the Premiership's leading clubs adhered to tradition on Thursday, sprinkling points like needles from a festive tree. There was just one exception and no one was surprised to discover *the man behind that piece of* parsimony was football's old skinflint, Alex Ferguson.

Only Manchester United won out of the top seven two days ago and suddenly they are looming like ghosts of Christmas past in third place. They go into today's match against Leeds United five points behind the leaders Liverpool with a game in hand and with the momentum of nine goals without reply in their last two matches.

"We've got to keep this going," Ferguson, whose hunger and energy to succeed is one of the wonders of the game, said. "It's a particularly demanding time. We must ensure that we are still among the challengers at the end of the festive period."

Ferguson's dilemma today will be whether to start with Andy Cole, who underlined his return to fitness from two broken legs by scoring in the 4-0 de*feat of Nottingham Forest.* The £7m striker came on for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer at the City Ground but, as the Norwegian has scored three times in the last two matches, dropping him will not be a decision taken lightly.

Not that sentiment usually clouds Ferguson's decisions and *he now has the luxury of seeing* past disruptions to his team as a blessing. "Nobody apart from Eric Cantona and David Beckham has played a lot of games," he said. "All the rest have had a mixed and short season and they *are looking good and fresh."*

The last time the champions met today's opponents, a 4-0 win ended Howard Wilkinson's managership at Elland Road although, if there is one match that spurs the Leeds players on, it is this one. Last Christmas they produced their best performance of the season for a 3-1 victory that included a goal from Tony Yeboah. The Ghanaian came on for his first senior outing for nine months against Coventry on Thursday and he is likely to start this afternoon.

It required only one encounter with second-placed Arsenal for Kevin Pressman to reduce his view of their championship chances. The Sheffield Wednesday goalkeeper had a largely untroubled night against the Gunners on Thursday and said: "If I was a betting man, I'd put my money on Liverpool. They're the best-balanced side *we've met this season."*

As for Arsenal, he added: "They're hard to break down," which is where we were before Arsène Wenger arrived promising style with resilience. Quite what the Gunners' manager made of his team's performance against Wednesday is not known *because he did not turn up for* an after-match press conference and, following Ferguson's similar non-appearance the previous week, Hillsborough is becoming the Bermuda Triangle of visiting managers' thoughts.

Wednesday have not lost since 12 October and their manager, David Pleat, has gained enough from that to rotate his players, ensuring they stay fresh. Regi Blinker and Andy Booth were rested against Arsenal and are likely to play at Chelsea, who will be without the suspended Franck Leboeuf and Dennis Wise.

Nevertheless he is not entirely satisfied. "I keep reading about Leeds United that you need to sort out the back door before you look at the front," he said, "and we've become hard to beat. Our problem now is scoring. I think we've got some goals in our locker."

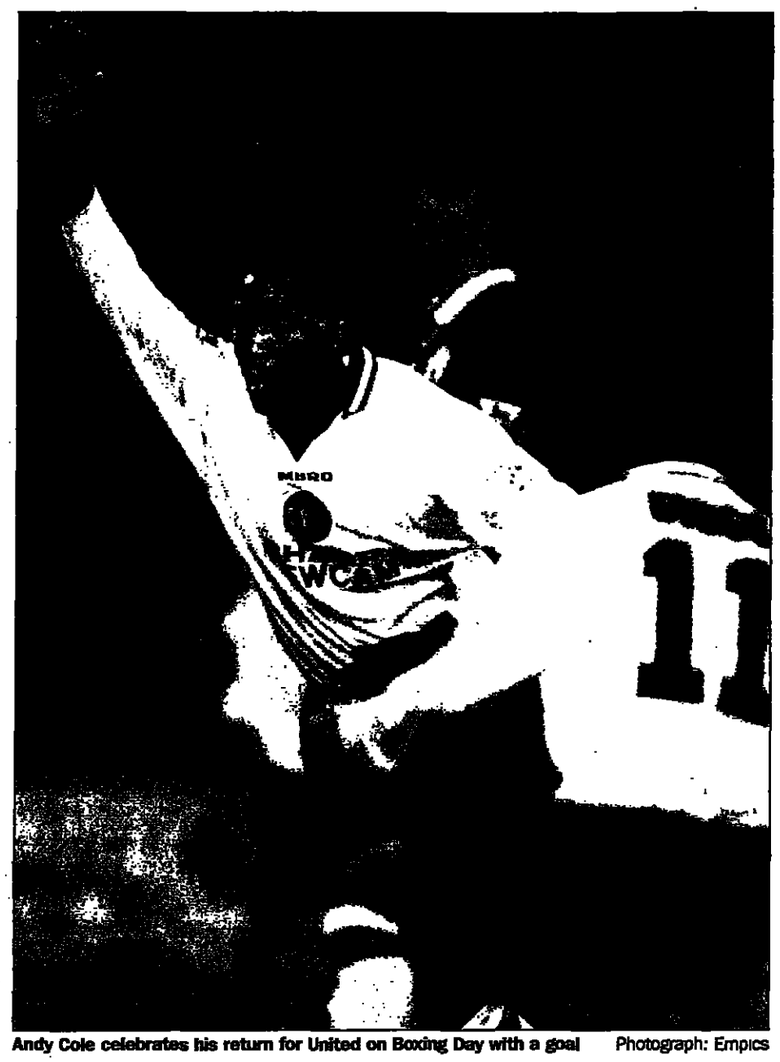
Perhaps, as Ruud Gullit seems to suggest, it is simply becoming more difficult for teams to impose themselves: Chelsea's player-manager is impressed with the quality of the Premiership, saying it is improving fast. "It's very open. Perhaps it's because there are more foreigners now, maybe because of the way England played in *Euro 96.*

"But whatever the reason there's a great deal more attention on the Premiership from abroad now. The standard is certainly better. Clubs are spending money to try to get re*sults, and that's got to be good."*

Coventry got both goals and a good result against Leeds, securing only their second win in 32 attempts at Elland Road. Attention will be turned today on their goalkeeper. Steve Ogrizovic, 39, *will make his 544th ap*pearance for the Sky Blues against Middlesbrough, breaking a 26-year-old record set by his former manager, George Curtis.

He has been around long enough to have played with and against Graeme Souness and Martin O'Neill, who will be pitting their sides, Southampton and Leicester, against the clubs where they had their greatest playing days. There seems little chance of them getting misty-eyed, however.

Souness plays host to the leaders Liverpool tomorrow, saying: "It's just the first of a lot of tough games," while O'Neill will prepare for the visit of bottom-placed Nottingham Forest with scarcely a thought for the club with whom he won championship and European Cup-winning medals. "I enjoyed my time at Forest and in normal circumstances I would like *to see them* play away from trouble," he said. "But it's a dog-eat-dog world." It will be the theme of the day.



Andy Cole celebrates his return for United on Boxing Day with a goal Photograph: Empics

Clough is keen to stay on

DERRICK WHYTE

Nigel Clough, who is in the middle of a one-month loan spell at Nottingham Forest, wants to make his return to the City *Ground permanent.* Clough was signed from Manchester City on a temporary basis by Stuart Pearce, Forest's caretaker player-manager, and the striker has told the club he would like to complete a permanent move.

Meanwhile, Pearce has opened talks aimed at securing the long-term future of the midfielder Alf Inge Haland at the City Ground. The Norwegian, whose current deal ends in the summer, has been the subject of an inquiry – though not a formal bid – from Leeds. Manchester United have also been linked with the player.

Gary Breen, Birmingham City's highly rated central defender, is likely to be out of action for a month after an incident outside a restaurant in London. The Republic of Ireland international needed stitches in a head wound and suffered a broken hand.

Italian newspapers have reported that Roberto Baggio, the Milan striker, has lost up to six billion lire (£2.35m) in an alleged investment scandal. Baggio was one of at least 200 people – reported to include a number of footballers – who placed money in a finance company based in the Adriatic resort of Rimini.

Komen has weight of history behind his challenge

Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

The nationalities of the past five winners of the County Durham International Cross-Country reflect the balance of power in middle-distance running.

Since 1991, when the Durham event became part of the World *Cross Challenge, the Interna*tional Amateur Athletic Federation's integrated cross-country series, the men first past the post have been: Kenyan, Ethiopian, Ethiopian, Kenyan, and Ethiopian. It is going to take something unusual to prevent another Kenyan adding himself to that sequence today. At 20 years of age, Daniel Komen arrived in the freezing environs of Durham yesterday as the coming man in middle-distance running.

Despite missing the Olympics after finishing only fourth in Kenya's high-altitude Olympic trials, the former world junior *5,000 and 10,000m world cham*pion put together a staggering sequence of races in the latter part of the summer season: he clocked the third-fastest 5,000m in history, a Commonwealth record of 12min 51.60sec; set a world two-miles best of 8min 02.54sec, and, on 1 September, eclipsed Noureddine Morceli's 3,000m world record of 7min 25.11sec with 7.20.67.

Komen's compatriot Ismail Kirui, a former 5,000m world champion, has pulled out of the event, but Komen arrived safely yesterday after spending one and a half days travelling from Nairobi.

"I promised I would run and I don't want to let anyone down," Komen said. "I'm hoping to win but I know that Jon Brown is in good form."

The aforementioned Brit, who two weeks ago won the European cross-country title in Belgian mud, faces a far harder task today in both senses of the word. But he is the best-placed *to emulate the last British win*ner, Eamonn Martin (1990).

Brown, who insisted this week that his target is a top-six placing in the world cross-country championship in Turin three months hence, was cautious in his forecast. "I want to do well and it would be nice to win it," he said from his Düsseldorf training base. "But I don't want to expend energy unnecessarily or use up too much mental energy."

Paul Evans, this year's Chicago Marathon winner, and Andrew Pearson, the runner-up in Durham last year, will add to the British challenge against a *field which includes Kenya's* Christopher Kelong and last year's winner, Assefa Mezgebu.

The women's race has Britain's Paul Radcliffe, the Olympic 5,000m finalist, making her first major appearance since recovering from a knee injury. Radcliffe, the winner at Durham in 1993 and last year, faces opposition from the world cross-country champion Getenesh Wami – an Ethiopian, naturally.

SPORTING DIGEST

Taylor aiming for fifth title

Darts

Phil Taylor will be chasing a fifth world title and a record first prize of £45,000 when he begins his latest defence at the Red Band World Championship at the Circus Tavern in Purfleet, Essex, today.

Taylor, 36, won the official Embassy World Darts title in 1990 and 1992 and then broke away with 15 other top players to form the World Darts Council. Taylor has since won the WDC version of the world title for the past two years. Twenty-four players will compete for the title.

Jets can cement their place on top

Basketball

RICHARD TAYLOR

Chester Jets, the unlikely joint leaders of the Budweiser League at Christmas, will go clear at the top of the table over the new year period providing they beat the Worthing Bears tonight and the Sheffield Sharks lose against their cup final opponents, the London Leopards, tomorrow.

The Jets have finished in the league's bottom three for the past three seasons but this season they have won 10 out of 15 games and are a home banker against struggling Worthing Bears tonight. Sheffield beat the Leopards, 104-100, at the London Arena last month in a controversial clash when nine players were fouled out of the match.

London Towers, the defending league champions in a three-way tie at the top, have a free weekend.

Basketball

The Dallas Mavericks traded the injured and disgruntled All-Star point guard, Jason Kidd, to the Phoenix Suns on Thursday as part of a six-player deal. The Mavericks acquired guard Sam Cassell and forwards Michael Finley and A C Green from the Suns. Phoenix, who also gave up a second-round draft pick in 1997 or 1998, acquired guard Tony Dumas and centre Loren Meyer.

Christian Laettner scored a career-high 37 points as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Chicago Bulls 108-103 on Thursday. The Hawks won their 10th consecutive home game while the Bulls had an eight-game winning streak broken.

NBA: Toronto 98 New Jersey 96; Atlanta 108 Chicago 103; Indiana 95 Detroit 89 *(ot)*; Miami 96 Orlando 76; Minnesota 88 New York 80; Golden State 113 Dallas 108; Houston 101 Milwaukee 90; Philadelphia 118 Denver 89; Utah 99 Portland 94; Seattle 94 San Antonio 86; Sacramento 111 Vancouver 88.

Cricket

Northern Transvaal, requiring 232 for victory, were 46 for 3 in their second innings at the close on the second day of the four-day Supersport Series match against Boland yesterday.

SUPERSPORT SERIES (Paarl, SA) Second day of four): Boland 170 and 179 (K C Jackson 62, M J G Davis 6-80); Northern Transvaal 117 and 46 for 3.

Football

TRANSFERS: Phil Stant (forward) Bury to Lincoln (undisclosed fee); Scott Fitzgerald (defender) Wimbledon to Millwall (loan); Kenny Brown (defender) West Ham to Birmingham (loan); David Lucas (goalkeeper) Preston to Scunthorpe (loan).

THURSDAY'S LATE RESULT: Bell's Scottish League Premier Division: Aberdeen 1 (Dodds 14) Celtic 2 (Cadete 41, Di Canio 83).

Ice hockey

Sheffield Steelers are to send video evidence to the British Ice Hockey Association after Jamie Leach, their leading points scorer, suffered a horrific injury in Thursday's defeat by Cardiff Devils. Leach had to leave the ice late in the game with a gash just below his left eye following a high sticking incident involving the Great Britain skipper, Shannon Hope. X-rays revealed a double fracture of the cheekbone which will keep him sidelined for up to six weeks.

NHL: Buffalo 5 Hartford 1; Detroit 5 Washington 4 *(ot)*; NY Islanders 4 New Jersey 1; Ottowa 5 NY Rangers 2; Pittsburgh 3 Montreal 3 *(ot)*; Tampa Bay 3 Florida 3 *(ot)*; Chicago 4 St Louis 4 *(ot)*; Los Angeles 5 Phoenix 2; San Jose 6 Vancouver 1.

Skiing

The French downhill racer Nicolas Burtin injured his right knee and leg yesterday, in a spill on the icy Stelvio course during the first training run for a World Cup speed race in Bormio, Italy. Burtin, on his third season on the World Cup circuit, had his best career result in Val Gardena in 1994, when he came eighth in a downhill.

MEN'S WORLD CUP ALPINE DOWNHILL TRAINING (Bormio, It; 3,270m, vertical drop 1,010m): 1 W Franz (Aut) 2min 00.91sec; 2 F Strobl (Aut) 2:01.80; 3= P Runggaldier (It) 2:02.30, A Skardal (Nor) 2:02.30; 5 L Alphand (Fr) 2:02.59; 6 K Ghedina (It) 2:02.96; 7 J Strobl (Aut) 2:03.34; 8 G Mader (Aut) 2:03.37; 9 R Assinger (Aut) 2:03.41; 10 A Fattori (It) 2:03.65.

From a Canary to a Ram
What a difference a year has made for Ashley Ward, Page 22

sport

Days to savour
Independent writers recall five sports events that shook the world, Page 19

Zimbabwe stick to their plan

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE
reports from Harare
England 156
Zimbabwe 93-2

This was the second time in two days England have been rained upon from a very great height. Although this time it was more literal than metaphorical, with all but four balls of the final session being wiped out, you still get the impression that England are being toyed with from above as well as on the field.

The downpour, which lasted for two hours, meant that Zimbabwe only batted for 48.4 overs. At less than two runs per over, it was painfully slow going – and yet this is how Test cricket is meant to be played and anyone who saw the nuts and bolts going into the long-term construction of Zimbabwe's total cannot have failed to realise that it was simply an illustration of how to bat in a five-day match. Something England, the old-stagers of the game, appear to have forgotten.

On the other hand, England optimists – a breed almost as thick-skinned and rare as the black Rhino itself – will see the rain as an opportunity for Michael Atherton's team to get back into the match, with the time lost forcing Zimbabwe to swap their plodding game plan for something more inherently risky.

If so, they have failed to reckon with two things: firstly, Grant Flower's rooting ability on this black cotton soil pitch; and, secondly, the fact that England have the wrong bowling attack to exploit such a slow surface.

Flower, at least here at Harare Sports Club, is about as immovable as one of Raymond Illingworth's opinions. Two years ago here, he hit an 11-hour double-century against Pakistan in the longest innings ever by a Zimbabwe player – its monolithic qualities, as well as the slowness of the outfield, being emphasised by the fact that just 10 fours were scored.

The bad news for just about everyone is that he is still there, the unperturbed frequency of his forward lunge draining the life from England's bowlers. At one stage, just before tea, England thought they had prised him from his crease. Alec Stewart completed a smart leg-side take off Robert Croft that every close fielder felt the batsman had hit. Not out said umpire Russell Tiffin and Flower went on to finish the day unbeaten on 33, having spent almost 200 minutes at the crease.

As tenures go, it was about three hours longer than that of his opening partner, the left-handed Mark Dekker, who, after being drafted in to replace Stuart Carlisle, had the misfortune to receive and then edge a ball Alan Mullally managed to slant away from him.

Before yesterday, Mullally's approach with the ball had been to try and bore out the unboreable, with a spectacular lack of success. Yesterday, however, he ran in with real purpose, tightened his line and even got the ball to swing in to the right-handers, although several close calls for lbw against Flower failed to be upheld.

He is the only pace bowler in England's side comfortable with pitching the full length required on this wicket. A criterion both Andy Caddick and Chris Silverwood would surely have better fulfilled instead of one of the spinners, whose effectiveness will wane every time the match gets further shrunk by rain.

By contrast, the Yorkshire pair, Darren Gough and Craig White, like to bang the ball into the pitch preferring to use the full-pitched ball – mainly in-swinging yorkers – as a surprise.

It is a method Gough more or less confirmed after his 11 wickets against Matabeleland, when he boldly announced that he was "not a line and length bowler". They were never comfortable with the strictures placed on them by conditions and a desperate captain.

Such reticence normally produces a stream of unremarkable deliveries, and one, a long-hop from around the wicket bowled by White, managed to see off Alistair Campbell, who sliced his cut shot straight to Graham Thorpe at first slip.

It is about the only time that Thorpe, whose batting is going through a wretched patch, has contributed to England's cause in this series. It has been a confidence-sapping experience that many believe would have been better alleviated had England batted the in-form John Crawley in front of him at No 5.

Crawley, who with Phil Tufnell added a further 19 runs in the morning, is probably playing the most assured cricket of his career and he ended his 220-minute stay at the crease unbeaten on 47, after Tufnell chested a short ball from Heath Streak on to his stumps.

That dismissal brought Streak his fourth wicket. A welcome fillip after the bowler had been fined 15 per cent of his match fee (1,000 Zimbabwe dollars or about £60) by the match referee, Hanumant Singh, for saying he thought he had been lucky to get away with some of the tactics he had used to stop England winning in Bulawayo.

The relief did not stop there either and in an unprecedented move the English media, feeling that the bowler had been unjustly punished, clubbed together to pay Streak's fine for him. A gesture made towards the "defence of free speech." A maxim this current England team is having difficulty in coming to terms with.

England's Phil Tufnell flees the field pursued by the groundstaff carrying the covers as rain brings play to an early end in Harare yesterday Photograph: Stu Forster/Allsport

HARARE SCOREBOARD

Second day; Zimbabwe won toss.

ENGLAND – First Innings
(Overnight: 137 for 9)

J P Crawley not out 47
(217 min, 169 balls, 3 fours)
P C R Tufnell b Streak 9
(66 min, 37 balls, 1 four)
Extras (bl, b5, w1, nb5) 12
Total (88.1 min, 83.1 overs) 156
Bowling: Streak 24.1-7-43-4 (nb2, w1) (4-0-13-0); 10-2-11-3; 5-2-10-0; 5.1-3-9-1). Brandes 18-6-35-0 (3-0-11-0; 4-0-12-0; 7-5-7-0; 2-1-4-0). Olonga 9-1-23-1 (nb3). Ewin 5-0-13-0; 4-1-10-0). Whittall 5-5-2-0; 4 (4-2-2-1; 5-3-7-1; 4-2-3-2; 3-0-6-0). Strang 18-7-31-1 (5-0-5-0; 11-7-26-1).

Progress: Rain halt: Tea after 80 overs at 1/7-9, 156; 3/0 min, 80.5 overs. Innings closed: 10.42pm.

ZIMBABWE – First Innings

G W Flower not out 33
(113 min, 104 balls, 2 fours)
M H Dekker c Stewart b Mullally 2
(19 min, 16 balls)
A D R Campbell c Thorpe b White 22
(72 min, 53 balls, 2 fours)
G J Whittall not out 26
(101 min, 69 balls, 1 four)
Extras (b2, nb4) 10
Total (for 2, 193 min, 48.4 overs) 93
Fall: 1-5 (Dekker), 2-46 (Campbell).
To bat: H H Streak, A C Waller, G J Whittall, P A Strang, H H Streak, E A Brandes, H H Olonga.

Bowling: Mullally 12-3-22-1 (7-2-14-1, 5-1-8-0); Gough 11-3-13-0 (nb3) (5-2-8-0, 6-3-7-0); Croft 8-0-22-0 (3-0-21-0, 5-0-22-0); White 14-4-15-1 (7-1-13-1, 0.4-0-0-0); Tufnell 10-3-18-0 (nb1) (one spell).

Progress: Lunch: 36-1 (G Flower 16, Campbell 15) 17 overs. 50: 103 min, 25.3 overs. Tea: 93-2 (G Flower 33, Houghton 26) 48 overs. Rain stopped play: 3.06pm. Play abandoned: 4.03pm.

Umpires: K T Francis (Sri Lanka) and R B Tiffin (Zim).

Flower shows all batsmen the way

HENRY BLOFELD

Zimbabwe have so far taught England two lessons about the requirements of success on this desperately slow pitch. On the first day the bowlers underlined the importance of pitching the ball up and bowling straight; on the second the batsmen demonstrated the necessity for careful stroke selection.

Numerically, this must seem to be just about the dullest Test match in history. In 310 minutes on the first day 137 runs were scored from 73 overs: in a fraction more than four hours on the second, 112 came from 59 and yet it has always been absorbing.

This has been the ultimate grafters wicket and the Zimbabwean batsmen restrained themselves better than their English counterparts.

After the early loss of Mark Dekker, Grant Flower showed that if there is one batsmen in the world better able to cope on such a surface, it is his brother Andrew.

The combined adhesiveness of the Flowers can be taken for granted. What could not was the way in which Alistair Campbell and Dave Houghton, both natural stroke makers, did their best to curb their instincts. Campbell managed for 18 overs while Houghton, not without occasionally making the bowlers think they had a chance, has so far been in for 25 overs.

Grant Flower provided the inspiration and example as he pushed and deflected and occasionally drive, foot to the pitch and head right over the ball. His concentration is of Boycott proportions.

He never cut or hooked, he never grew impatient and seemed set only on playing an even longer innings than the 112 his brother made in 365 minutes last week in Bulawayo.

If they bat together for any length of time in this innings it will be as close to stalemate as cricket is ever likely to get.

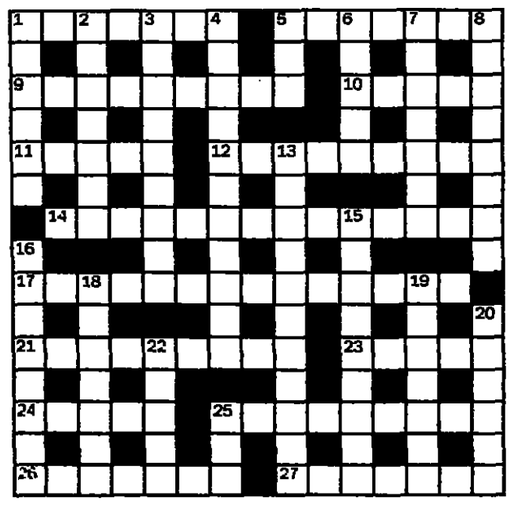
Campbell, tall, lithe and left-handed began by trying to drive Robert Croft and, to his increasing frustration, was never able to time the ball. He soon realised the folly of his ways and became happy to join his partner in a desultory search for singles. From time to time as a variation he used the pace of the seamers to glance or run the ball to third man.

Houghton was even more praiseworthy for he looked, more out of sorts when having to play this sort of game. He took few real risks and he was only prepared to sweep the spinners when the ball was pitched outside off stump.

The England batsmen, who are likely to have quite a job on their hands in the second innings, had better have taken note.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3181. Saturday 28 December By Corylus



ACROSS

1 Where child plays could make you spit? (7)
5 Allowed to have access to legal document? This must be cancelled (7)
9 Prolongation of old stress (9)
10 Puzzle about what moves commuters (5)
11 Crossing an equine animal (5)
12 Stop chicken production at source? Some consumers like this (6,3)
14 Who might start this kinsman's rumour of Santa? (8,6)
17 They could keep you going three rounds filling in twice (4,10)
21 Poor star's bad doing the splits? (9)
23 Arab woman in place of contest (5)
24 Getting cold and taking a chance as day fails (5)
25 Alibi unacceptable to Scottish town's jurisdiction (9)
26 Expert manipulator of figures (7)
27 Mischievous type of girl men upset (7)

DOWN

1 Seen off at zero not half showing effect of cold (6)
2 Worthy of remark but impotent (7)
3 A scrap and a riot together will attract these? (9)
4 Having very little to hide (4-7)
5 Agreement over river (3)
6 Part of lovely Richmond theatre (5)
7 Greek character carries skilful live performance (7)
8 Greed is a variable in conflict (8)
13 Report of bringing on baby too fast is arrogant (11)
15 Awfully cruel about setting up life to make a profit (9)
16 Disgusting CIA acts netted one a complaint (8)
18 Not examined, being on remand? (7)
19 Book having letters like "zee"? (7)
20 Disappoint with letters from Bulgaria? (6)
22 Apprehensive state in English street (5)
25 There's no profit in cheap drinks place (3)

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P. O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: Philip Dacre, York; Peter Roots, Tunbridge Wells; J Lynch, Penylan; Ken Price, Trimant; Irene Rae, Inverkeithing.

East Germans face drug charges

Sports officials who helped to make former East Germany a dominant force in certain Olympic disciplines are facing the prospect of being charged with causing bodily harm for supplying competitors with banned performance-enhancing drugs.

A spokesman for the Berlin justice ministry said prosecutors were preparing charges against about 50 East German sports administrators, doctors and trainers, and that the first charges could be brought next year.

"The investigations are continuing," said Rüdiger Reiff, the justice ministry spokesman. "It is a very large and complicated issue. The charges being prepared are bodily harm through doping of East German sportsmen and women."

The investigations, which were opened about 18 months ago, involve huge amounts of documentation so, to make their cases more manageable, prosecutors have focused on swimming, cycling, athletics and weightlifting.

Despite its relatively small population of 17 million, East Germany consistently produced a string of champions, winning almost as many Olympic medals as the United States or former Soviet Union, whose had populations at least 15 times as big to call upon. The country found particular success in women's swimming and men's cycling in Europe and beyond in the 1980s.

About 20 athletes have already filed suit against their former mentors, among them the weightlifter Roland Schmidt, who had to have removed from his chest some breast-like tissue, which apparently had developed because of steroid abuse.

The complexities of the issue mean that charges will be laid only in cases where the athletes were given drugs without their knowledge, which means prosecutors are concentrating principally on the doping of children and youths.

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